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PlayStation.2

GAME BOY ADVANCE



NEED FOR COVER SPEED MOST **WANTED**

78

X INPUT

16 INPUT

E-mail your comments to opm@ziffdavis.com, but please, no more of the comic book superhero-based physics questions!

HYPE

22 PSP LAUNCH

Crack open the champagne and celebrate! Get ready to race on the go. 34 MARC ECKO GETS UP Street culture, meet videogames 40 SMELLS LIKE GTÅ Are these games just clones? You decide. 48 BUILDING CHARACTER What makes you love a game character? 51 PRINCE OF PERSIA 3 The warrior comes back for part trois.

52 PLATFORMING GOODNESS The returns of Ratchet, Jak, and Sly.
54 REINVENTING TOMB RAIDER

How can Eidos make you love Lara? 58 MEDAL OF HONOR Screenwriting legend John Milius on the best war of all time. 68 THE POWER 20 2005's most influential PlayStation people.

REVIEWS

- Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition
- 92 Cold Winter
- 92 Haunting Ground
- NARC
- 93 Full Spectrum Warrior Enthusia
- 95 Dragon Ball Z: Sagas
- Graffiti Kingdom 95 95 Obscure
- 95 Stella Deus
- 96 Wipeout Pure
- Tony Hawk's Underground 2: Remix
- Twisted Metal: Head-On 97
- 98 Gretzky NHL

- 98 NBA
- 98 World Tour Soccer
- NFL Street 2: Unleashed
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005
- 100 Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower
- 100 Spider-Man 2
- 101 Ape Escape: On the Loose Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory 101
- 101 Smart Bomb IDS DVDs

MREPLAY

106 GRAN TURISMO 4

Getting your car perfectly in tune. IIO CUT THE CORD Who likes wires? Not us.

111 REVIEWS ARCHIVE Every PS2 game rated.

112 STAR WARS RETROSPECTIVE Skip the line for Episode III and hang out with your PS2 instead. 116 WARHAWK Why did this flying masterpiece disappear? Build the perfect multiplayer map.



116

OREWIND

122 OPM THROUGH THE YEARS We start celebrating 100 issues a little early.

GAMES COVERED INSIDE

52		63	Sly 3
0	187 Ride or Die	112	Star Wars Battlefront
0 -	25 to Life	42	Star Wars Battlefront II
0	50 Cent: Bulletproof	112	Star Wars Racer Reveng
2	Cold Winter	112	Star Wars Starfighter
5	Dragon Bail Z: Sagas	96	Stella Deus
4 P	Enthusis	158: 1	TimeSplittera:
0 .	Fear & Respect		Future Perfect
3	Full Spectrum Werrier.	186	Tomb Raider: Legend
5	Graffiti Kingdom	116	Warhawk
. 80	Gran Turiemo 4		
2	Haunting Ground	PSP,	
3	Jak X	101	Ape Escape: On the Loos
12	Lego Star Wers	26	Burnout Legends
B: 1	Merc Ecko's Getting Up:	100	Darkstalkers Chronicle
	Contents Under Pressure		The Chaos Tower
6	Marvel Nemesis:	96	Gretzky NHL
	Rise of the Imperfects	**	NBA
(a)	Medel of Honor:		NFL Street 2: Unleashed
	European Assault	101	Rengoku: The Tower of
8	Midnight Club 3:		Purgatory
	Dub Edition	101	Smart Bomb
2	NARC	100	Spider-Man 2
В	Need for Speed:		Tiger Woods PGA
	Most Wanted		Tour 2005
6	Obecure		Tony Hawk's
2	Onimusha 4		Underground 2: Remix
	Prince of Persia:	97	Twisted Metal: Head-On
	Kindred Blades	86	Wipeout Pure
2	Ratchet: Deadlocked		World Tour Soccer











The Power 20





Sad that you can't go to E3? Well dry your eyes, because you can find out all the latest excitement from the show floor right here at 1UP.

OPM. IORCOM
Think the OPM editors are the best reviewers ever? Think they have the worst taste in the world? Whatever you think of them, you can go here to directly comment on everything that they write.

This fancy-pants little portable gadget can do a whole lot more than just play games. To find out all of the creative ways in which people are using it, slop by the dedicated PSP page.

Don't trust that e-mail in your in-box with "HAWT GAMING NEWZ READ ME-NOW" to be accurate? Then trust this page instead.

It's like having all your friends in a little electronic box where you can share all your takes of how your cat loves to play God of War at absolutely any time of the hight or day. You're a lucky son of a gun.

There are clubs on our site about absolutely everything. There are even clubs about clubs. Surely you can come up with a more original idea for a club than half of these people have—go on, we challenge you.

From the description: "Yee, people, there's a new AIFS in sown, and here is the club to discuss it!"

WHAT'S WRONG WITH LUMINES?

AND THE LESSONS THAT MAY BE LE



Wait just a minute here: Shouldn't Lumines, that maddeningly meamerizing for the PSP, be a complete and total failure? Where's the blood, the dirty language, the hip-hop stars, the GTA/urban settings and characters? Where's the racing mode? Where's its military stealth/squad multiplayer features? Where, oh where, is the sex?!

By today's standards, Lumines should never have seen the light of day. It's hauntingly addictive (I've missed bus stope playing it). It's inventive, smart, and the ideal game for a handheld system (along with RPGs). It was created with fun and challenge in mind, not cynical marketing tectice.

Ah, if only game publishers would make more "mistakes" like Lumines. Our second straight cover feeturing a racing game from EA is no mistake. Need for Speed is one of the hottest PS2 gaming-let alone racing-franchises today. How could we not send Giancarlo off to the northerly climes of Vancouver, British Columbia, to get the lowdown on what's bound to be one of the "most wanted" games of the year. « To

THE OPM FAMILY

MISSION STATEMENT

The Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine is the only Sony Computer Entertainment America-licensed magazine and is published by Ziff Davis Media Inc. through an exclusive agreement. As such, the Official U.S. PlayStation Mag azino (OPM) remains inde pendent from SCEA and is a critical, autonomous voice that helps readers get more out of their PlayStation system by delivering the most current, comprehensive, and tion software and hardware



has been nostalgic for the May issue, because she would much rather kick butt as Kratos than be a robot who runs like C-3PQ and gets beaten up or a student who is too stupid to leave the possessed high school by just walking out of the parking lot.



spotted his first random forty-something playing PSP on the ferry ride intowork recently. Considering Joe's played nothing. but PSP since launch day, he couldn't be happier. Unfortunately, he didn't have his copy of Wipeout handy to challenge the guy.



has let too many people has been using his pteroknow that he has a couple dactyl technique to utterly of kittens and has now molest all takers in Soul been inundated with cat Calibur II. The technique memorabilial Websites of involves distracting his cats sleeping in the most opponents with an elbow to the junk and then bizarre positions! Calendars of cats sleeping! knocking them out of the Screensavers of um ring like a cheap little girl. cats sleeping.... Hay! Do One of these days, we'll they do anything else?! ctake him...but not today.



wants to take this opportunity to wish Sheri, who probably is the coolest mom ever, a happy Mother's Day. She spent endless hours in the cold waiting in line just to buy a. PSP for her son. This one goes to you, Sheri, because you are awasome.



loves Sin City so much

that he decided to stop being a colorful games editor and is now trying to become a black-andwhite psychotic cannibal. He's practicing by eating the characters of other systems before graduating into full-blown peoplemunching.



is desperate for some Winning Eleven action on. PSP. How desperate, you ask? Desperate enough to dress up in a monkey suit and harass Konami employees. His pleas were: undermined by the fact that he was carrying a PSP with World Tour Soc cer in it, though.



wonders what would happen if EA decided to replace the cars in Need for Speed with donuts and the cops with cups of coffee. When the donuts turned around to face the coffee, they would say, "The hunter has become the hunted." Yes.



has not been heard from since starting god mode in God of War. If you have any tips as to her whereabouts. please let us know. We've already called all the hospitals, sanitariums, suicide prevention centers, and anger management clinics in Vancouver, though, so don't bother looking there.



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ON THE DVD

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

It's summer, and you know what that means. lots of demos of fairly low-profile games that may or may not turn out to be any good. This month, we got lucky with the surprisingly entertaining Stolen and Lego Star Wars.



WATCH AND PLAY



An in-depth feature on the PSP, complete with some nice footage of Hot Shots-Golf and an interview.



How's this for motivation: The slightest screwup sends you back to the Main menu screen Ouch. The game looks surprisingly sharp, though

It's drift-heavy street racing in

an over-the-top, cartoony style. Bet big on your race and see

your respect increase with your peers. If only it were that easy



Want to play a boxing game that's almost painfully realistic? Want to hear a blow-by blow commentary on facial deformation? You've got it



If seeing scenes from Episode I reenacted with Legos doesn't make you giggle, then you have no soul. YOU HAVE NO SOUL. Have fun destroying everything



A 3D platformer based on an animated movie? What on earth will they think of next? Switch between three mammahan characters and go for broke.

You might as well call Stolen's

Fisher " She's got the moves,

heroine Anya "Samantha

sure don't).



In honor of the Battlefront II announcement and the premier of Episode III, we figured we'd give you another taste of this Force-tastic shooter



We've got downloads to unlock all levels in Second Sight and everything in BloodRayne 2.



certainly (though those guards

A great trailer for a very prom ising game. Ubiquitous devel oper Pandemic appears to be developing a mix of GTA. Psi Ops, and Mars Attacks!



This is video only, but it should give you a sense of the kind of over-the-top cops-and-robbers thing the 25 to Life developers are going for



It's GIANT ROBOTS FIGHTING WITH SWORDS AND GUNS IN SPACE. Really, what more do you Gundam fans need to



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Steve Williams, Jesse Caid, Eric Lempel

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Technical Director Tim Edwards

Maimoona Block, Kirsten Costello, Christine DeNezza, Torr Grian, Cori Lucas, Gerald Martin, Sean Thomas, Jim Williams

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc* to OPM Disc Producer, Ziff Davis Media, 101 2nd Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the

If you have a malfunctioning or nonworking demo disc, call EDS at 1-800-627-6458. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services

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TONY HANK'S A LINDER GROUND & LINDER GROUND & LINDER GROUND & LINE AND A LINE

LEVELS:

A PERSON

















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ACTIVITION.



Blood Crude Humor Language Suggestive Themes Use of Alcohol





LETTER OF THE MONTH

I'm the assistant manager of a videogame store. One time, I had a customer come in with a [busted] PS2 that he bought in May 2004. He had also purchased the product replacement plan, so, of course, we are obligated to replace the unit with another used one. I had a traded-in PS2 sitting in the back, but the expansion bay cover wasn't on it because it once had a Network Adaptor attached to it. Well, being the stickler for completeness that I am, I grabbed another unit and removed the expansion bay cover to put on the replacement unit. As I removed the cover, I noticed a rather odd sight. It looked as if something was inside the expansion bay. I should never have looked.... Upon further examination, my jaw immediately dropped, and I walked to the door that led back onto the sales floor. I called one of my associates over and asked him if he had a moment. I so wanted to be seeing things. He came into the back, and I looked at him with a dumbstruck look on my face and asked him if I was really seeing what I thought I was seeing in the expansion bay. His eyes widened, a huge grin broke out on his face and he started laughing. He then proceeded to remove the...items of discretion. Lo and behold, what was stashed in the PS2? You won't believe this, but there were 11 (yes, we counted) Trojan condoms. They were still inside their wrappers, of course, but still.... Nice ones, too. They were tucked away, probably wondering if they were ever going to see the light of day again. After several minutes of uncontrolled laughter on both our parts, I contacted a few of my fellow management team members and warned them of the dangers of videogaming. I also let my district manager know of the touchy situation. So, if you ever have an issue with your PS2, make sure you are properly protected against Videogame Disease. It could mean the difference between winky happiness and winky wilting. It was too funny; I thought I would share.

CONTACT OPM

Snail Mail

E-mail

a promote police

OPSPM2WTF?

So I just bought my PSP and I'm completely in love with it. The variety of games offered at launch completely puts the DS' [launch lineup] to shame, (Let's face it, Nintendo has a very disappointing game selection for the DS unless you're a sports fan.) What I'm wondering is, are we gonna see OPM branch off into two magazines now (OPSPM...think about it!). If other people are like me, they're gonna want demo discs for the PSP just like how you guys offer one for the PS2. If OPM doesn't do this but still plans on reviewing PSP games, is there gonna be less space to cover all the games coming out for PS2 (or perhaps OPM will just become a lot thicker to keep up with all these new games)? With the launch of the PSP and the upcoming launch of the PS3, 2005 seems to be a year of revolutionary change in the game industry, so I guess now I'm waiting to see how OPM adapts

SpcMatt97 via e-mail

GOD OF KILLOLOGY

Dana loved it, and now so do a bunch of the zany message board kids. There was a humongoid thread about GOW, and here're some snippets:

edgerunner glowingly states, "It's definitely a more mature title, with tons of blood and gratuitous nudity, but it's all in the context of the game. As for the (anti-7) hero Kratos, let's just say he makes Solid Snake look like he should be appearing on the Life time network. It has elements of Prince of Persia and the first Tomb Raider. It will definitely be a contender for Game of the Year (at least in my opinion)."

ohJTbehaave goes for a more visceral and slightly masked profanity effect by saying, "It's after playing a hot triple-A-quality game like this that you come to realize that close to 70 percent of the games that are released are pretty much total sees.

oralb808 decides to keep it real by adding some antilove, saying, "With regard to the graphics...I dunno. Perhaps I'm jaded la little more so since I'm just coming off RE4), but the graphics are nice...but not really impressive or awe-inspiring. I mean, it all looks nice and shiny and all that, but for me, it just seems to be missing something: more power! These graphics might be maxing out the PS2, but again, I'm finding it hard to be wowed by them. Oh well."

POINTMENTS

On a seemingly random whim, theonetru mayhem decides to air his biggest disappointment of 2004 and encourages others to add theirs. He writes, "Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain. After beating the first three PS SF games, I was anticipating next-generation combat with awesome graphics. Instead, what we got was awful at best."

"i'll say Sony's online [play]. After SOCOM II, which came out in November 2003, Sony didn't really give us much compelling reason to take the console online, save for FFXI, although I don't think that appealed to a large number of PS2-owning people," muses c_strife97.

LuminousAether decides to air his unpopular and contrarian viewpoint: "Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal. It was a boring, derivative rehash with nothing new and a tacked-on and horrifically implemented online mode. I'm sorry I paid money for it; it wasn't worth it."

CrispyChicken decided to address the now-broken Bond legacy, saying, "Golden-Eye: Rogue Agent. I bet the developers forgot they were making a sequel to one of the legendary FPSes of our time."





are you lumines? bust blocks, groove through puzzles and

jam wirelessly against friends stack 'em right and you'll unlock

lush levels and buttery beats

want to be lumines?

"The game many are aiready calling the best game for PSP.

"The best game for PSP" 4 out of 4 stars -USA TODAY



























CORRECTION

doesn't draw her checks from Vivendi Universal as

DANA LIKES THE LADIES?!?

I find it a bit strange that Dana Jongewaard has been reviewing games for a male-oriented audi ence (The Guy Game, Playboy: The Mansion) when there are plenty of male editors to review them. Is Dana a lesbian? If not, why has she been reviewing those types of games?

Derek Neumein

via e-mail

BURGLED!

I have owned a PlayStation 2 and 15 to 20 games for years. At least I did until March 15, when, on the drive home from work, my 9-year old son called me and said, "Mom, you have been robbed, and the only thing taken was your PlayStation 2 and some games."

When I arrived home to check this out, I discovered that they had had enough time to pull all the wires from behind my television stand, go through my games, and grab my memory cards. They left my son's GameCube on the floor after removing it from on top of my PS2.

Tara Henderson

via e-mail

TEKKEN FIVE STARRING...

I was flipping through Issue #91 and saw the advertisement for Tekken 5. It wasn't the game that caught my eye but the new character pic tured on the top right. (I looked it up, and he's named Raven.) The funny thing is, he looks exactly like Simon Phoenix, the villain of the movie Demolition Man with Sylvester Stallone His face and hair are dead-on, and his clothes are pretty close as well. On top of that, they're both named after birds. Just thought I'd bring this to light since I got quite a kick out of it

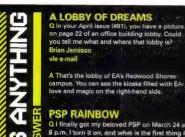
Ben Daniels

via e-mail

MAKING CLINT'S DAY

If I could have any movie made into a game, it would be the 1982 Clint Eastwood movie Firefox, which was made by Warner Bros. and is based on the Craig Thomas novel of the same name. After all, it has the potential to be a pretty good combat flight sim if the right company were to do it, such as Namco It would be inter esting to be piloting the Mach 6 Soviet stealth superweapon while wreaking hypersonic havoc over the former Soviet Union by way of Siberia Jonathan Montalyo

via e-mail



via e-mail Q I finally got my beloved PSP on March 24 at 6 p.m. I turn it on, and what is the first thing I notice? A green startup screen! I check the box; it shows a blue screen. I check the Web for a picture of the PSP: blue screen. I happen to see the TV ad...what do you know? Blue. Did I do something to the PSP? Bryan Westall via email

A Nope, it's not you; it's the PSP displaying its vast awareness of time and space. Well, just

time, as it changes color every month, and March was green.

OH NOMAD, WE MISS YOU

O Hi. I need to find out how long the PSP's battery will last and if you bump the PSP, will its laser screw up and then you will have to fix it? My friend Matthew is telling everyone that the battery only lasts for 30 minutes and that if you bump [the system] hard enough, the laser will screw up. Please prove him wrong. Chris Jenkins

A Your friend Matthew is the most extravagant of charlatans. While the PSP's battery life depends on what the device is doing (games that spin the disc constantly eat up more PSP juice than games that load sparingly), it won't be as pathetic as half an hour. Those days are long gone. Next time Matt says that the PSP's battery lasts for half an' hour, just say "Battery jokes are so 1995!" and slap him or something. As for your other point, we don't think bumping it will screw up the laser, although you still shouldn't hit your PSP.



THE MONTH

Thoras Manuach

CLUB OF THE MONTH

The Lamine Fan Caub

The next big thing in entertainment is surprisingly small.

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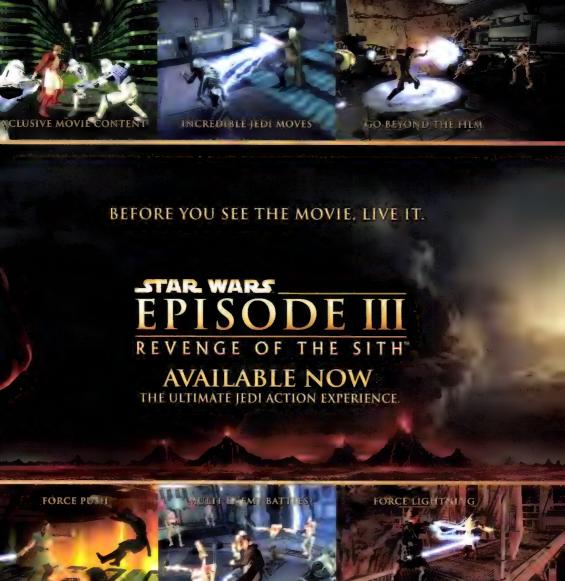












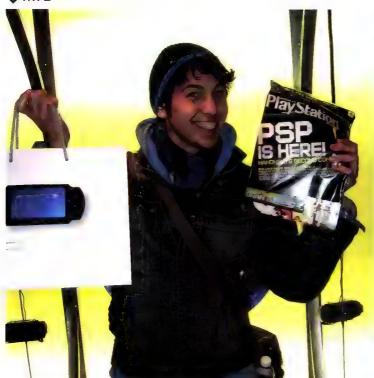




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INSIDE

- **BURNOUT LEGENDS**
- The power of *Burnout* in the palm of your hand. **ONIMUSHA 4**
- The trilogy is over, but the franchise continues.

 SMELLS LIKE GTA
- The newest crop of gangster games is coming your way. THE OUTSIDER 44
- Welcome to online gaming—you suck.
 BUILDING CHARACTER
 Kojima, Price, Inafune, and more on how to create
- characters that matter.
 RATCHET: DEADLOCKED
 - He's back and he's better armed than ever
- NUMBERS 64
 - The page that counts.

























By March 23, 2005, excitement over the PSP's North American launch the next day had reached a fever pitch. Finally, gamers across the continent would be getting their Gollum-like hands on their precious new toy

The Sony CEA executives were out in full force, granting interviews to journalists erross the country, though they weren't all on the same page. Jack Tretton, the executive vice president at Sony CEA, said, "In terms of us trying to introduce applications to consumers, we're really focusing on it being a gaming device for launch period. We're not saying, 'Hey, before you buy that iPod, come over here and check out the PSP!"

That same day, Sony CEA president Kaz Hirai said, "If someone told you that the PSP is a portable gaming device, shoot those people. The PSP is not a portable gaming device, it is really a convergent portable entertainment device.

As far as we're aware, Mr. Tretton is still alive and well, but Sony's mixed message represents the confusion that consumers may be feeling about the PSP. While it's a sure magnet for gamers, technology publications and websites have been less gung ho about its overall capabilities, a not atypical headline was Forbes' "Great for Games, Not Much Else."

None of that hesitancy was in evidence by the evening of March 23, however. Dedicated and hardy souls started lining up at the Sony

Metreon in San Francisco extra early to ensure they would be one of the first to get a PSP; in fact, the first person in line got there at 8 a.m. on March 22, waiting it out for 40 hours through rain and wind

Official festivities began at 7 p.m. Girls in usherette outfits handed out free snacks and drinks, bouncers in headsets kept the line in order, and a huge PSP hanging on the building opposite the Metreon ran game

A HUGE PSP HANGING ON THE BUILDING RAN GAME FOOTAGE

footage as a gigantic timer counted down the seconds until midnight Those further back in the line would have to wait a bit longer than that, however; cashiers were busy checking out new owners past 4 a.m. Turns out those people probably could have gotten a little extra shut-eye---while sales were brisk, only 500,000 of the 1 million units shipped for launch day were sold immediately. But what are a few hours of sleep compared to the distinction of being one of the first PSP owners? «

MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

08

It's May Day, when you celebrate the coming of spring and your mighty fertility! Go crazy with the flowers and the seeds and all that! Just don't overdo it.

De

today? It's birthday

Richthofen! Then

chase down Snoopy.

Tell your mom that you really do care, because it's Mother's Day after all. Otherwise, she'll do something mean like let your little brother use your copy of God of War as a substitute diaper or somesuch.

Oh man, nine cats scattered around the homes of the OPM staff are going to enjoy today, since it's Hug Your Cat Day. If you lack a furry feline, the crazy cat lady down the street can help.

check

for the dirt

Oh KenJen, you mag nificent Jeopardy-winning fellow, how we envy you and your Jeopardy earnings! Perhaps you can take Jewel for a birthday for-two meal, and she'll write a poem.

At its 3 p.m. PST press

conference, Sony will

about the much-antici-

pated PlayStation 3.

Want details? Then

finally release info

30

Memorial Day is a pretty important holiday that memorializes our honored dead who've fallen in duty. If vour school doesn't recognize this day, maybe your orincipal hates freedom.

IMON THES

Can you smell what The Rock's got cookin' strudel for both him and Baron Manfred von they'll hop into the Red Baron's biplane and

It's Bono's birthday today, and we bet you forgot all about it. Don't fret; you can say, "My gift's in the jet," then run off to snag him either Cold Winter or Haunting Ground.

[NEW GAMES]

17

Cash monies demand to be spent, so spend them fast by picking up Metal Slug 4 & 5, Motocross Mania 3, Outley Volleyhali Remix, and Outlaw Tennis today.

[NEW GAMES]

24

Buy CG-animal-movie based game Madagascar or zany Japanese RPG Atelier Iris: Eternal Mana. Too bad there's no zany Japanese CG animal RPG combo pack

[NEW GAMES]

31

On this loneliest of days, when the spring fever of May comes to an end, there is but one light in the gloom: the release of Digimon World 4.

[NEW GAMES]

IMED

If you like to go vroom vroom," then you can drive to the store to pick up a game about driving to places that aren't the store. Enthusia, and also the Star Wars Ep III game

ITHUR

200

Hey, you've been

invited to a massive

dudes Tony Hawk,

Rhames, and George

Emilio Estevez

Carlin! It's at the

Applebee's at 7:30

NEW GAMES 1



Today marks the first of the three glorious videogame-filled days that are otherwise known as E3. Go visit news and pictures so up to date that it's almost like being there

Gandalf and Magneto

share the same birth

day-zany! Actually,

assume he still takes

to either Gandalf the

Grev or Magneto

B-day cards addressed

birthday. But we

it's just lan McKellen's

This is the biggie, the one that shows both the creation of Darth Vader and a deliciously pregnant Natalie Port man. You say you'll hate it, but you know you'll love Star Wars Episode III.

20



ISA1

Jb You can watch either

House of Wax, which has the saucy Elisha Cuthbert and a lessnaked Paris Hilton, or Ridley Scott's Kingdom of Heaven, where Lego las goes out to fight dudes in Jerusalem.

IFRI

If you're wondering why ads for Mindbirthday bash for lucky hunters looks so familiar, it's because it was supposed to come out in January of last year. Stephen Baldwin, Ving Go see Jet Li learn love and love violence in Unleashed instead.

Today is National Waitress and Waiters Day, so be sure to tip them generously while enjoying the yeal. Otherwise, they might slather it in odd bodily fluids without telling





Get more action this weekend.



SZOSS Vocas Wireless Controls



\$2499

TV Games: Star Wars and Batman



Yu Gi Oai Collectible Cord Game



Tean Titons Collectible Card Garn

Buy 3 Booster Packs, Get 1 Free

SEPPER SE



The Wayans Bros, presents The Dozens Collectible Card Game

Get more out of your game.

NEW BLOCKBUSTER



COURT ORDERS SONY TO FORK OVER \$50 MILLION

A United side is district court for Northern California has ordered Sony to pay \$90.7 million to Immersion for patent infringement involving technology inside the DualShock controller. Immersion alleges that the rumble technology used in the DualShock closely resembles the technology Immersion designed for use in such devices. The original amount Sony was asked to pay totaled \$82 million, but the court awarded an additional \$8.7 million to Immersion for prejudgment interest

More importantly, the court also issued a preliminary injunction against Sony that prevents the company from selling the PS1, PS2, and 47 games that were deemed to directly infringe on the copyright. Does this mean you can't go out and buy a PS27 Fortunately, nothe injunction won't actually take effect until after appeal proceedings in the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit; how-

ever, Sony will still have to pay a royalty fee to Immersion during that period. The company is also asking the court to require Sony to pay the damages during the appeals period. "The compulsory license during the stay of

the injunction creates a binding obligation for Sony to compensate us for the continued use of our technology in their PlayStation products," said Victor Viegas, CEO of Immersion. "We have always believed, and continue to believe, in the strength of our intellectual property. We remain confident of our position in the

anneals process

Microsoft fell victim to a similar lawsuit in 2002, but the company opted to settle out of court rather than engage in a drawn-out legal battle. Microsoft paid \$26 million for licensing rights of Immersion's technology, which the Xbox and a variety of other Microsoft products currently use. (

ZOE FLOMER



It's 2 a.m. For the past three hours I have been wincing each time I glance toward the clock, feeding myself a line that I know all too well to be a complete fabrication-"Just five more minutes and then I'll go to bed." I know we've ail been there, incapable of stopping for such trivialities as sleep! And as I enter into the final boss battle of God of War, the desire to beat the game creates an exponential increase in my ability to fight off the darkness creeping down my eyelids. This game conjures up the pure absorbing glee that I felt as a young girl in the arcade (ah yes, those sweet childhood days of unapologetic murder and destruction!). But the end is very near and I am consumed with a knowing dread.

I have a confession. Whenever I get to a final battle—no matter the game—I become an utter and complete newbie gaming spaz. Time and time again, whether I'm taking out the Boss in Snake Eater (deep down I didn't want to kill barnyway) or contemplating the intimidating scale

ZOE FLOWER is a fervent gamer with a self-diagnosed case of adult-onset attention deficit disorder.

She. ...umm...hay! Is that a chocolate cupcake? I love chocolate. Has anyone seen my shoes? You can try to get/Zoe's attention at zoeffover. IUPcom.

of Ares, the god of war, I am reduced to a non-DualShock-induced body-shaking, arm-flailing, palm-sweating, teenage-girl-squealing disaster! How is it that a videogame can create such an adrenaline-inspired reaction?

My patience wears thin as I am squished like a bug over and over—and insult gets added to injury as the game offers to switch to easy to turn off the light, I realize the PSZ is still whirring away—calling to me. As I stand like the status of Athena (except in fuzzy pajamas instead of see-through robes), the controller somehow gravitates to the relaxed hands of somenone with nothing to lose—and who obviously doesn't give up despite her better judgment. But then, without a single twitch, I deal a series of swift blows to my opponent. It is over. I have won. I am a god. No sweat.

congratulate myself on my deft skill (i.e.,

WHEN I GET TO A FINAL BATTLE, I BECOME A NEWBIE GAMING SPAZ.

mode. I am inflicting such force on my controller that I feer I shall break the L3 stick clean off. I try multing the audio to help take away some of the situational stress. Yet I still fail. I yell at the game, knowing I am really just frustrated by my own ineptitude.

I limp fortornly away from the game to prepare myself for some much-needed sleep, brushing my teeth and trying not to think about how my bloodshot eyes will look when I get up in five hours without the bragging rights of beating the game to comfort me. And as I reach

lots of silent jumping and jurging and punching of air) in the hopes of erasing the previous stint of utter incompetence. Whether it was the false courage generated by an upright playing position (less blood rushing to my head?) or the much-needed bathroom break, I feel a new hope that I might have overcome my spassitionandicap. Of course, the only sure way I can prove it will be to survive the masochistic god, mode without giving myself a stroke.

I might be standing in my living room for a

I might be standing in my living room for a long time. «

DIGITAL DEVIL GAGA

THE CRITICS ARE GOING GAGA OVER DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA

"WITH TOP-NOTCH VISUALS, A PROMISING SCORE, A UNIQUE STORYLINE AND COMPLEX PLAY SYSTEM, DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA: AVATAR TUNER IS DEFINITELY THE RAP OF SINK YOUR TEETH INTO..." — RAPSFAN.COM

"It's EVIL. It's COOL. AND IT'S A @#\$% GOOD GAME!" — ANIMERICA

"IT'S STILL THE GENRE YOU KNOW AND LOVE, BUT FEW GAMES HAVE THIS LEVEL OF POLISH AND ORIGINALITY." — G4TV.COM **大**

"DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THE BEST RPGS IN A LONG TIME." — SILICONERA

"THE COMBINATION OF SLICK GRAPHICS, BIZARRE STORY, AND TRANSFORMING ABILITIES SHOULD MAKE THIS AN **RPG** TO REMEMBER." — PSM

"A DEEP, MATURE, AND ORIGINAL PLOT, BEAUTIFUL CEL-SHADED TEXTURES AND PLENTY OF HIDDEN EXTRAS ... MAKE SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DIGITAL DEVIL SAGS ONE OF THE GREATEST POLE-PLAYING EXPERIENCES ON THE PLAYSTATION 2 TO DATE." — PSX NATION

"A CUTTING EDGE, MODERN RPG... DDS IS A GREAT FINAL FANTASY ALTERNATIVE." — EGM

"SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA MAY JUST BE THAT NEXT GAME THAT BREAKS THE MOLD OF IT'S GENRE, AND SETS ITSELF APART AS DINE OF THE BEST GAMES OF ALL TIME."— 1D/10 — GAME CHRONICLES MAGAZINE.

"SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA ... IS A WORK OF GENIUS." — CYBER GAMING NETWORK

"HANDS DOWN THE BEST RPG ON THIS GENERATION OF CONSOLES." - INSIDE PULSE

"A DARKER RPG FOR AN OLDER GENERATION OF GAMERS." — GAMEPRO

"RPGs DON'T COME A WHOLE LOT MORE JAPANESE THAN SHIN MEGAMI
TENSE: DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA. FROM ITS TITLE TO THE ART AND STORY,
EVERTHING WE'VE SEEN ABOUT DDS FALLS RIGHT INTO LINE WITH THE
TONE OF HEAVYWEIGHTS LIKE FINAL FANTASY, XENDBAGA, AND DRAGON
WARRIOR . . . FANS OF ANY OF THOSE NOBLE FRANCHISES WILL NO
DOUBT FIND A LOT TO LOUK FORWARD TO IN DDS." — GAME INFORMER

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- FULL COLOR 40-PAGE MANUAL
- DEFICIAL SOUNDTRACK CD FEATURING 30 TRACKS FROM

WWW.DIGITALDEVILSAGA.COM





PlayStation_®2













BURNOUT LEGENDS WHERE RECKLESS IS BETTER THAN WRECKLESS











ere impressed when we saw how awesome Burnout Legends looks on PSP, but we were even more impressed when we went back and compared it to the first Burnout (pictured above), which was a first-gen PS2 game. Damn.

while sitting on your couch at home is pretty freakin' awesome. But even more awesome is the prospect of driving crazily while actually on the road. Soon we'll have the chance to do that very thing: The Burnout franchise is coming to PSP

Rather than porting the upcoming Burnout Revenge to the small screen, Criterion has opted to make Burnout Legends a best-of compilation of the series-think of it as Burnout: Greatest Hits You'll be able to tool around favorite courses from past games; included in Legends will be Harbour Town from Burnout, Palm Bay Heights and Big Surf Shore from Burnout 2, and Downtown from Burnout 3. And all of these courses are being updated so they will mirror the look of Burnout Revenge

You'll have a variety of modes available to you as well. Standards such as race, road rage, crash, eliminator, burning lap, and preview lap will all make appearances, plus the popular pursuit mode from Burnout 2 will be resurrected. There will also be several modes unique to PSP, including pur suit rage, which is basically a meld of pursuit and road rage; legends faceoff, and legends grand prix. Crash fans won't be left in the cold, eitherright now, the plan is to have 70 to 80 crash junctions in the game.

Wi-Fi multiplayer will be a component of the game, and while the developers have yet to determine the number of opponents you'll be able to compete against, they're looking at doing more than just your standard connect-and-play. One idea they're experimenting with is providing content that's unlockable only through multiplayer matchups-for example, you could win a car after beating someone in eliminator mode. Something else they want to include is a single-race demo that you can beam to friends who might not yet have the game; the demo will work on your friend's PSP for as long as he leaves the power on

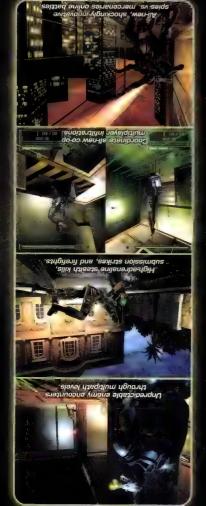
So how does it look? To be frank, pretty amazing. The speed, while still not as blistering as it is on its console counterpart, has gotten exponentially faster in the month between the first and second times we got to play it. Producer Nick Channon says, "The biggest challenge has been to capture the look and sheer speed of Burnout. We want to make sure that we deliver all of this on the small screen." Handling is a little bit tougher

YOU CAN TOOL AROUND FAVORITE COURSES FROM PAST GAMES.

than it is on the console versions—people may find themselves defaulting to the D-pad to control steering rather than the analog nub.

How does Channon feel about the possibility of people actually driving while playing Burnout Legends? When we ask, he responds. "I would hope that this is something no one would ever consider doing!" Consider yourself admonished

EA Games E ... Criterion Fair



WSd Or to two 2.8 INNOVATIVE GAMEPLAY" "FANTASTIC VISUALS



vanished. Find him at any cost. Bring the battle closer to the enemy - bring it to their soil before the chain of chaos becomes unstoppable. You are Sam Fisher. You are a Splinter Cell. missiles? This is 2007. This is reality. The one programmer who has the key to this algorithm has What if an algorithm could creath the stock markets, black out New York, and hijack ballistic







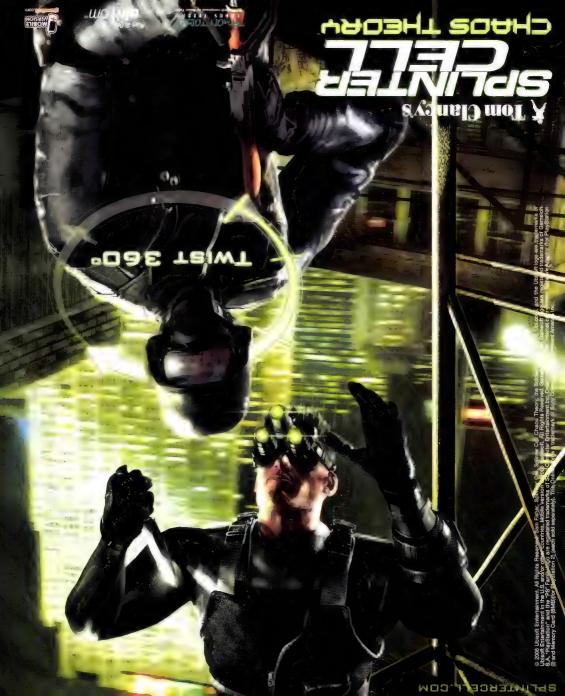




BRING THE BATTLE GLOBER, NOW!



























ONIMUSHA 4

YES, THAT'S A 4 UP THERE

Wait, didn't series producer Keiji Instune say that Onimusha 3 was the last game in a trilogy?

Well, he meant that Onimusha 3 was the last installment in the Nobunaga trilogy. The story of taking down demon warlord Nobunaga is now over; this next Onimusha is the first part of a new story line, which takes place about 15 years after the end of Onimusha 3. Basically, it's a historical Japanese version of "meat the new boss, same as the old boss," as Nobunaga's successor, Hideyoshi Toyotami, has now allied himself with the genma demons and seeks to mess up Japan as a result.

With the fresh story comes a fresh start in the overall game design (suspiciously similar to how Capoum "rebooted" the Resident Evil franchise with REA). Pravious Onimusha games have basically been more action-oriented Resident Evil games dressed in samural armor—that is, relatively straightforward hack-n-slash action-adventures. Onimusha 4's main changes include a more open-ended, nonlinear design and a buddy system for combat. In previous games, you just walked down a linear path and didn't have any flexibility in deciding where to go and when. Now, in Onimusha 4, you have more choices as to where you can go, and you can go back to previous areas and unlock new items and secrets. Sure, you can stick to the main path and play it like a previous Onimusha title, or you can choose to take the time to explore every nook and cranny for bonus items and weapons or revisit old areas and undertake new challenges to unlock even more loot.

The other big change to the game is the use of multiple characters. First off, don't expect to see actors such as Jean Reno and Takeshi Kaneshiro take up roles as Jacques and Samanosuke (respectively) again. Onimusha 4 features new characters and a distinct lack of known actors (producer Yoshinori Ono says that Inafune wanted to introduce new characters instead of actors this time). You start off as Hideyasu Yuki, and you eventually gather four more characters for your entourage. As you zip around slaying genma demons, you can choose one of these four to be your partner in battle. You can not only switch back and forth between the two characters, but also order the other character to attack, defend, or just chill for a moment. Finally, you can pull off slick combined attacks that totally tear through all the demons in the area. Most of these characters are being kept a secret, but one we'velearned about is Jubei Akane, a superagile little gal who can slow down enemy attacks. Each character is well balanced and provides an interesting combo that should provide for a decent measure of flexibility and replayability in the game.

Despite the lack of internationally recognized French fellow Jean Reno, Onimushe 4 looks like a legitimate new start for the series, and hopefully it will continue the trend of making the fourth game in a series a whole new experience rather than a rehash of the previous three. «

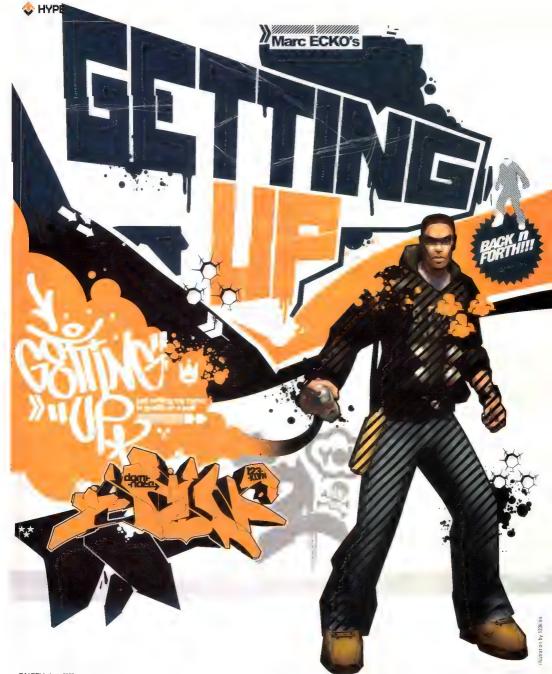
Pub. Capcom Dev. Capcom Release Fall



Staff Sergeant Anthony Leavitt. Specialist Renny Sotero. 10th Special Forces Group. BEING A SOLDIER MEANS SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS GOT YOUR BACK



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Clothing designer and graffiti anist Marc Economy be new to developing games, but that doesn't mean he doesn't have strong opinions on what is right and wrong about the industry. This past February he spoke at the DICE Summit and challenged the industry, telling attendess, "Your technology means fe** all. Consumer adon't give a s*** about you." He's put ling his money where his mount of a preview of his game, check out page 38. Here's the lowdown-on what he hopes to accomplish and how the world has been changed by the proliferation of street at.

OPM How is it working with a small development team?

MARC ECKO Atari as a publishing company is big, but the experience
they allowed us to have. Bruno [Bonnel], Atari's CEO] was hell-bent on
allowing us to operate like a truly independent team. It was very risky
because he has shareholders to please, and it's a big organization with a
tot of pressure, but he was convinced that if we approached the project
with a traditional model where you marginalize an outsider's voice [then it
wouldn't work]. I didn't know s*** about making games. I'm a gamer. I
can tell you what I like about gameplay and the brands that I love, but I
technically didn't understand what I know today. He was really taking a
risk that I would be a quick learner and that The Collective was going to
be a tolerant group

OPM How hard is that, though? Obviously, this is your game and your idea, but there are other people messing around with it and putting their own spins on it

ME It was hard in the first six months. There's a great story to be had with some of the old art for the game because I want people to see what the process was for myself and The Collective. And I think the product is better off for it. We got past this certain point—for us, it was last £3. Building that trailer as a visualization device was a test because we weren't even on the radar at that time. I knew that from a gameplay point of view, navigating a darkly lit space, there are problems with knowing what is navigable and what isn't Knowing where I can tag and can't tag Knowing that there were going to be technical limits putting graffit everywhere. Knowing that I wanted a high level of production value on the graffit art assets

I think ultimately, as we build the brand, we'll move the product toward more customization] I even see derivative products we can take with the Getting Up brand and do more free-form, open-environment, multiplayer experiences—pit one crew against another. We can get there, but first I wanted to put the flag in the ground and create a really cool graffit experience, and I knew to do that, I needed to have some other hook that would get the cynic on board. I needed a story component and some other gameplay mechanics to get the cynic interested), and that's why working with The Collective has been such a rich experience in marrying these goals together.

OPM Well, from what we've seen, it seems you wanted to build a good action game and then work everything around that

ME The principals of The Collective would always say, "Marc, we hear you, but we need to be committed to easing a great game, and you have to understand that the gaming community will look at this and ask, 'How is this any different from Jet Grad or any other game with graffitt in it?'" It was very sobering to hear that

OPM It's pretty obvious that The Collective's past experience with fighting mechanics is being put to good use

ME Trey've done a rice job with it. It was funny because early on, from a marketing point of view, we thought everyone was going to see our fighting system and think Def Jam Venderta. We thought the press might, think it was something derivative because it was urban. It's not You saw some of the animations for the characters, and some of them are funny and over the top andat's satisfying from a gameplay standpoint.

"MY WHOLE CAREER IS THE ULTIMATE FORM OF GRAFFITI."

OPM You mentioned earlier that you wanted to bring the graffiti culture to a broader audience, much like Tony Hawk did with skating. Are you worried about getting backlash from people that have been a part of the graffiti scene?

ME You mean like a selling out thing? My whole career is the ultimate form of graffiti. There are going to be people that hate ust like there are the skaters that hated on Tony Hawk, but there are a so these artists out there that the broader part of pop culture should be honoring. There's not a set aesthetic that has had more influence on popular culture than graffiti over the years. It's a medium that where if you live in São Paulo and speak Portuguese and I'm in Newark and we don't know anything about each other, we can both be into graffiti. Why? Because it's cultural and there's something anthropological about it. It's cray—when you travel around the rest of the world you see that every city has graffiti.

I'm taking this culture and putting it on a pedestal. Yeah, I'm making a commercial product, but I'm bombing the system - got inside the party It's just digital graffin as far as I'm concerned. It's been the same hustle and motivation. I make blazers and woven shirts—to me, getting my name inside that labe—is the same fir**ing high that I used to get when I tagged the backseat of a bus. It's the same hustle and swagger that a kid has, to want to make sometining from nothing.

OPM What do you think fuels the culture?

ME It's a generation thing I hope it's not lost it is the fact that a lot of the leaders moving it didn't have s'-" growing up. There's not a cultural movement outside of hip-hop that has spawned more marketers and entrepreneurs. The most tenacious entrepreneurs grew up with hip hop—they have the same hustle and swagger and I think that's what fuels it from a commercialization side. From a consumer side, people who realize

UNLIMITED CASH The transition from making your own? Fashir's to operating a company that earned over \$300 men's appared is one that most people would probably file to make. \$00, Ecko hasn't jout sight of what it took to get to this route in life make.







THE SUPPORTING CAST

Much like the *Tony Hawk* games have featured real-lifeprofessional skatars, *Getting Up* will use some of the world's most renowned graffiti arises (pictured at left) to train and assist the main character.

COPE2 got his start in the late 1970s and is known for his work in the subways.

FUTURA has a similar.
background to Cope2 but
is also known for pushing
the medium as a legit form
of expression.

SEEN was a major part of, the artistic movement in New York during the 1990s. He got his start bombing trains, and now Seen's work is on display in a variety of museums.

SHEPARD FAIREY is probably the most wellknown of all the artists; you might have seen his work in the form of massive Obey posters that feature a superimposed image of WWF wrestler Andre the Giant's face. Fairey's work has also found its way into museums across the country and around the world.

graffiti out of the shadows of the subways and onto the surface for everyone to see.

T-KID got his start in the late 1970s and still continues to paint murals in the Bronx.

they don't have s*** think, I'm going to do better than my father. There's that dream from when you're young, and that's not a black thing or a white thing. It's a human thing. You see it all over the country.

OPM What do you think when you see games like *Def Jam?* Does it ever upset you to see hip-hop culture presented in that way?

ME The consumer has to be educated by experiencing a range of products regardless of the medium. [Def Jam] is not our product. Is it a bad thing? Well, it's not something that I would opt to make given the opportunity to produce it or direct it, but that doesn't necessarily make it a bad thing. I didn't like Jet Grind Radio, but I know guys—the legendary graffit artists we have in the game—that love that game. To them, it was just a fun game. There's room for all types of products out there. As long as it doesn't exploit it to the point where the cultural train runs off the track, you won't hear me kicking and screaming. This is America and everything is exploitative in America.

OPM After this game is released, how would you feel if you saw other companies rush in to do conveat names?

ME I would be flattered. It wouldn't surprise me because this is the problem with the gaming industry. You're in the entertainment industry and the rate to bring products to the market is so lagged that the publishers end up looking stupid. It's like DreamWorks and Pixar—one has a fish movie, then the other has a fish move. They're on the heels of each other, so you suspect they might be copying. But it's a little lamel to build a product that costs \$5 to \$8 million and an additional \$5 to \$8 million to market when it's just a copycat at its core.

OPM Do you think it would even be possible for this industry to have an independent element?

ME I think it has to move toward that as more companies become huge conglomerates. Take the <code>Madden</code> and NFL deal. EA's going to be forced to do something clever to get that spark back. Independence will be nur tured and the guys that take the risk on it will [benefit]. There is a bunch of creative people out there. I'm lucky. Who am I to be making a game? I was painting T-shirts in my garage years ago. Who am I to be sitting across from these really smart people that are doing the heavy lifting? I'm just one of hopefully many people that, given the opportunity, will step to the challence.

It was my dream. I've been working E3 for seven years, looking around and walking with a folder and a script for the game

OPM Did you shop the game around during that time?

ME Early on, I was doing some hustle s***. I would show it to the most low-end marketing person at any company—whoever would look.

OPM What was the reaction?

ME Maybe we can use your clothes in the game [Laughs] We could put your logo in our game. All right, thanks. I did some of that. I'm not going to lie. EA was very generous with my brand and gave us a lot of breaks before a lot of other companies got in on it. We had a deal with Madden back in the day. I'm grateful for those opportunities to position my brand as a brand that's aware of gaming. As a gamer, I saw it as an emerging market and I wanted my brand to be positioned in that space. I was telling everyone that I wanted to sell enough Rhino sweatshirts in the hope that some executive would return my calls. That was my job. Everyone thinks of "ma clothing designer No, I used a clothing designer No, I used a clothing designer to get a meeting with Bruno Bonnei. It worked out. It was a slightly longer path, but you have to do what have you have to do sometimes.

"EVERYTHING IS SO DERIVATIVE. COME UP WITH A F***ING NEW IDEA.

OPM. It seems like there's really no outlet for people to freely pitch ideas like you did, especially when there's concern over who owns what once you make the pitch.

ME Well, everything is so derivative. Come up with a f***ring new idea Here's a heads up—don't make a female with two guns. Here's another one—let's stop talking about the creative process from a technical point of view where you're trying to put things in silos. What is that product? Is it a shooter? Is it a first-person shooter?

In the movies, what was 2001. A Space Odyssey? What was Taxi Driver? What was The Godfather? You couldn't classify those things Yeah, you could put them in 0 g, bold categories, but when you really get into the soul of the product, you see that they're really dynamic. Star Wars is science fiction, but it's also a very human story. They're trying to make these aliens very human and real

Right now, the creative process in the gaming industry seems to start off with putting things in technical silos that the creative element is designed around \sim



Claim your prize. Leave the rest for the coroner.









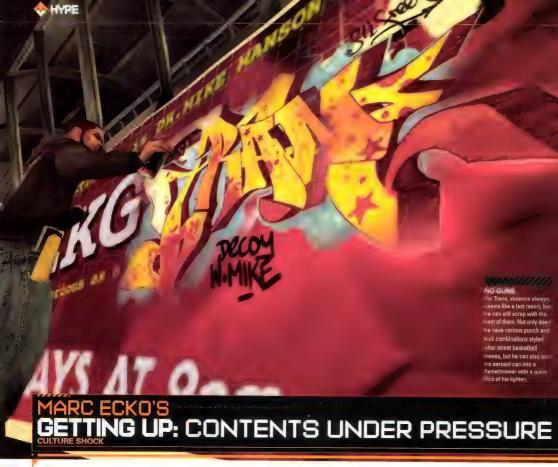




PlayStation 2



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"We want to do for graffiti what Tony Hawk did for skateboarding," says Marc Ecko, clothing designer and now game designer. From the looks of it, Ecko and the team at The Collective are well on their way to accom plishing this feat with Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure, which delves deeper into graffiti culture than any game before it. Sure, other games have tried the street-art thing before: The Jet Set Radio games feature it prominently, and even THUG2 tries to throw a little graffiti into the mix. But compared to Getting Up, all of these games merely gloss over what the culture is really about.

You might think there's a bit of a discrepancy here. Ecko is himself a graffiti artist, but what does a development team located in Newbort Beach, CA, know about graffiti? Well, not only have members of the team extensively studied the ins and outs of tagging, but some have even par ticipated in bombing runs by going to various locations and putting up their own tags to get a feel for what it's like to do the real thing. It's gotten so far into the minds of the game's producers that it has become a part of their subconscious: Now when they drive down the streets of Southern

California, they look at different buildings or signs and think, what a great place that would be to put a tag

So how does tagging buildings, an activity that's previously been only a side note in other games, translate into a full-fledged game? For starters, Getting Up was designed first and foremost as a game and not just a graffiti simulator. There are a few different facets to the gameplay mechanics in addition to tagging, moves will range from stealth and platforming to hand-to-hand combat-but no single feature seemingly overwhelms the others. Each gameplay element has been designed to work with the others in an effort to re-create the environment of what it's like to stalk the city looking for suitable landmarks to tag so that Trane, the game's main character, can achieve his goals.

In Getting Up, you'll get an idea of where to put a tag thanks to a highlighting system. This system will show you not only the general target area, but also the type and size of art that you're about to paint. You'll never really have trouble finding spots, just as long as you take the time to really look around the level and explore the depths of the game's set-

























ting, New Radius (a slightly futuristic city that's under the control of a despotic government).

Imagine a situation in which you're underneath a highway overpass and you spot an enormous freeway sign, a perfect place for a big piece of art. Next, you have to figure out how to get to that spot, which might involve climbing pipes, shimmying over railings, or even leaping from one overhang to the next. Then you have to factor in the bystanders. If there are construction workers, you shouldn't have much trouble scram bling past them, but if members of the Vandal Squad or the Civil Conduct Keepers totherwise known as a supremely brutal RoboCop style police force) are around, then you're better off sneaking around corners and avoiding them completely rather than trying to take them head-on.

Once you get to the spot where you want to start the tag, it's time to bust out those aerosol cans, stencils, rollers, or whatever other graffiti equipment you have at the time. The act of actually making a tag is more dynamic than you might initially think. Instead of just pressing a button and having the tag magically appear, you have to use the analog stick to

actually to move the can around and ful in the outline. Additionally, if you hold the spray in the same place for too long, then the paint will start to run, so you have to constantly move it around and make sure you're filling out the tag properly. Screw it up and you'll lose respect amongst

HOW DOES TAGGING BUILDINGS TRANSLATE INTO A FULL GAME?

your peers. Do it right and you get props for putting a massive tag where everyone can see it. Eventually, you'll move your way up from being a toy graffiti artist to being the most notorious artist in New Rad us and a symbol for the rebeliion against a tyrannical government

Put Atari De. The Collective September

LS LIKE GTA

PREPARE FOR ANOTHER URBAN ASSAULT

With the echoes of San Andreas still rolling through the development community, a new wave of urban-themed games is on its way. How-

	THE PERPETRATOR FEAR & RESPECT Midway Fail 2005	Los Angeles, CA	A reluctant urban hero	According to producer	STAR POWER	OUTLOOK
	Midway	Los Angeles, CA		According to producer		
			unwillingly drawn back into the gang lifestyle when he tries to help out a troubled nephew. The role of Goldie will be played by Snoop Dogg.	Nathan Rose, Fear & Respect is "More like a day in the life" and less about run-and-gun Gunfights will be more true to life—you can't just stand in the open and start shooting; you'll need to take cover and be smart in gun combat "	Huge. In addition to lending his voice and likeness to the game, Snoop's been heavily involved in the project from day one, influencing everything from art to script. And Boyz n the Hood director John Singleton is writing the story, storyboarding the cinemas, and work- ing closely with the developers.	Iffy. On the one ham you've got Snoop pulling the strings a a real-life director making sure the story's there. On the other hand, you hav a relatively untested development studio (Edge of Reality, bes known for Shark Tal and Prtfall: The Lost Expedition) working on the game.
	187 RIDE OR DIE Jasott Summer 2005	Los Angeles, CA	A reluctant urban hero named Buck must defend his mentor's territory with heavily armed vehicles. It's a racing gamel it's a shooting gamel it's in one! We're not sure whether to think of this as Midnight Club with guns or a hip-hop Twisted Metal	There's a much greater focus on racing, with modes like death race and cop chase	Middling, Larenz Tate (Menace Il Society) and Noel Gugliemi (The Fast and the Furnous) will lend their voices and likenesses to the game, which should make most of you say "who?"	Could have potential but people. Los Angeles just isn't thinteresting a city to drive around in. Assi from that detail, the game at least appea to be breaking new ground by having all the shooting take place from the cars.
014	25 TO LIFE	A fictional urban center	Two reluctant urban heroes named Detec-	It's a shooter, really. There's no driving	Practically nonexist- ent. The game will	Fairly grim. While the
	Summer 2005		tive Lester Williams and Andre "Freeze" Francis go head to head in an urban battlefield. It's "the first true cops-and-robbers game," per the press release, though it also could be described as SOCOM with cops and gangstas instead of SEALs and terrorists.	involved, and the focus is very obviously on online competition	have a soundtrack fea- turing "the pioneers of yesterday and the biggest names of today." The list at this point includes big- name artists such as 2Pac, Public Enemy, KRS-One, and Xzibit.	intriguing on paper, the exploitative, cardoony nature of what we've seen so far seems guarantee to alienate, well, jus about everyone
-3	50 CENT: BULLETPROOF Vivendi Universal	New York, NY	A reluctant urban hero named 50 Cent gets shot nine times and	The hero is a real- world rap star.	Big. In addition to 50 Cent's own extensive involvement, the	Unclear. The game still very, very early and details are few.



York City.

"Inspired by a climactic event" in 50 Cent's life, Bulletproof pits the rap star against the most dangerous crime families in New written by Sopranos executive producer Terry Winter.

like an opportunistic vanity project from a rapper with more money than he knows what to do with-but there could be a real game here



Metal gets mental in Metal Gear Acid for the PSP* handheld entertainment system—the game that sets its sites firmly on strategic and tactical thinking. Two playable characters, 200 strategic moves, Head-to-head wireless combal option. And an all-new way to play, if you're looking for a hot new game, nothing burns like Acid.

















STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II SIX THINGS EVERY JEDI SHOULD KNOW

Since Star Wars doesn't have any special intergalabile guides or whathot, we quickly assembled one to tell you the finer details of the recently announced Battlefront II. Use this cheat sheet to make yourself seem awesome and in the know in front of non-DPM-reading friends! Astound them with Battlefront If Ifacts like the ones below!

Of You can fight in the infinite reaches of space! That is, you can now conduct space battles instead of remaining landlocked. So you can now reen act zippy scenes like those at the end of Return of the Jedi or the space battle above Coruscant at the beaunning of Episade III.

QZ There are 16 new levels, several of which are taken from *Episode III*. Right now, we don't quite understand either the significance or the pronunciation of places like Utapau or Mustafar, but man, if you love *Episode III*, you'll be able to shoot dudes in these places! Rock on, Wookies style!

 \square 3 You can now fight in levels lifted from the original trilogy in addition to all the weird *Episode III* locations. If you like to roll old school in places like lea's totally sweet spaceship from the beginning of *Episode IV* or the halls of the Death Star itself, then you can pretend that George listened to you and demanded that those levels be added in

O4 You can be a Jedi. Yes, while other dorks will zip around willy-nilly and take potshots with peashooters, you can end them with a simple swing or two. Or maybe you want to zap lightning from your fingers instead. Lightsabers, popular Jedi powers, and a whole lot of attitude will be part of your arsenal as a Jedi

O5 The single player isn't just a "you have no friends—ha-ha" version of the multiplayer game. The A.I. has been tuned to act more like actual dudes, and now there will be story elements! This game includes openended mission-based objectives, so you now have a purpose to your existence, rather than serving as just another weapon with a larynx

D6 George Lucas loves you all.

Pub LucasArts Dev Pandemic Release Fali





PlayStation

TALKING 'BOUT HISTORY

If you love to pretend that, this issue will help. Not only do we have a rotro-specifies an good Star Warragames on page 112, but we also have a demo of the first Bettlefront! Yes, the first one, so don't write letters to us about; intelligence of 2004.

THIS IS NOT A CAR.

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It's your hard-earned cash.

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You build your car by winning. Putting your cash back in and using trillions of different performance and design combos. Then you build a crew of support cars, guys to watch your back. And if you've got the guts to risk everything you've built, you race online for the ultimate prize: the other guy sinds

























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OUT OF THE FAMILY

Francis Ford Coppola is one unhappy wine-maker and director thanks to Paramount's decision to license the Godfather movie property to Electronic Arts. According to IMDb.com, the director said that the studio never informed him of the decision and that he disapproves of the use of Godfather characters in such a manner "They use the characters everyone knows," said Coppola "Then for the next hour they shoot and kill each other. I had absolutely nothing to do with the game and I disapprove."

find another lobby." Suddenly, I'm the dork

who shows up at the park with new gear and

says, "Hi guys, wanna play?" only to creep out

THE BEST BOND

Everyone's iyes, everyone's favorite iteration of James Bond is back. Sean Connery will provide the voice and likeness for 007 in EA's new James Bond game. From Russia With Love The 1963 film of the same name featured 007 on a mission to retrieve special Russian equipment, Other members of the original cast will join Connery. "Videogames are an extremely popular form of entertainment today," said Connery. "I amisoloxing forward to seeing how it all fits toderther."

PS3 FOR E3?

While the event scheduled for the end of March that was supposed to show more of the PlayStation 3's technology was eventually scrapped, Sony still plans to show some of what PlayStation 3 can do during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in May. Current speculation suggests that an assortment of demos will be on hand to demonstrate some of the new technical features of the system's hardware, which will be powered by the Cell processor. Visit for up-to the-minute reporting from the show floor

NOTHING BETTER TO DO

Senator Hillary Clinton has officially jumped on the popular violence-in-videogames bandwagon, suggesting that violent videogames are a "major threat" to moral health in the United States. Taking a page out of Senator Joe Lieberman's playbook, Clinton suggested that games like Grand Theft Auto promote violence against women and encourage violence amongst different ethnic groups. She also used the word "dis" in her speech, indicating that perhaps Senator Clinton is now officially. "hii."

have to fudge to keep your job at Tower

Records. It's just a videogame. Cheating in:

videogames? Hmph, I hate Illinois Nazis. «



modes, I've put in at least 15 hours and I still

to compare in difficulty. I'm pretty sure I'll be

suck. The single-player campaign doesn't begin



naly All Tilmo Favoritos

Another Brick in The Wal. Barbie Gir. poly2902 Batman 171hems poly2903 Cotton Eye Joe poly2984 poly2905 Duel ng Banjos Finistenes nol+298A Don't Want To Br poly2998 poly2989 Inspector Gadget night Rider Low Rider My Prerogal ve ppiy291 poly2912 Rock Your Body poly2913 poly2914 Rocky Saved By The Belpoly2915 She Will Be Loved poly2916

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Chart Ringtones 1) 1,2 Step 2) Drop It Like It's Hot 3) Numb/Encore With the Head in real1280 real1282

poly2892 4) Boulevard Of Broken Dreams poly2893 5) Bad Boys (Cops Theme) poly2894 7) Tubular Belis (Exorcist Theme) poly2898 101 Baby Got Back Williams

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How to order... Messages

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Waiting For Tenight

Welcome To My Life

No Like To Party

Stand Up



Bling Your Phone Is Blinging

he Crazy Frog Begs To Pick Up

The Crazy Frog Goes To Mexico

Heads Shoulders Knees And Toes

Sweety The Chick - I May Be Small

Mammie Your Phone Is Ringing

Do You Like Scary Movies

The Crazy Frog Funky

Pick Up The Phone

Fluffy Laughs

Hission Impossible

The Crazy Frog Going Wild 2 Stroke

P ck Up The Telephone

Penguins In Trouble

The Crazy Frog - Motor

Reggae Sing



wall3126



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Turn He On Kev n Lyttle

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MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

... EA quietly announced that it was entering a partnership to publish a game that will "pit superheroes from the Marvel universe against new EA heroes." Not much has been said since that initial mention, which left the door open for gamers and the press to joke that the untitled "EA versus Marvel" game will feature bouts such as "Tiger Woods versus Luke Cage" or "Jean Grey versus SSX girl." Well, both EA and Marvel have started talking, and they're giving some surprising details

First off, the game won't have any existing characters from EA games. but rather wholly new heroes created just for EA. This might sound dopey and make people think that some corporate marketing dude is sitting at his desk figuring out what's hip and edgy for the kids, but EA has tapped Marvel talent (writers and artists) for the character creation and design.

The game is directly linked to the upcoming miniseries Marvel Nemesis: The Imperfects, in which Niles Van Roekel, an alien scientist, decides to create his own set of superhumans to take on characters such as Spider-Man, Wolverine, the Thing, and Elektra. The miniseries will be six issues, and each one will feature a new EA character, such as Johnny Ohm, who's pictured in the screen at the top. Marvel writer Greg Pak (who is handling

the miniseries; toid comic-book news site Newsarama com "What's got me really excited is that we've found the emotional hook. We're exploring that hidden core of doubt which may plague even the greatest heroes, as the Marvel characters and the new EA heroes struggle with the temptation of 'perfection' offered by the alien scientist's transformative technology

BRAWLS ARE FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH PROPERTY DAMAGE

Marvel senior editor Mark Paniccia (in a separate interview) also noted "The backstory of the game and the new characters [are] an integral part of the comic. We're not revealing everything about them in the comic We've agreed to save some surprises for the game. But you're getting real insight into some of them and an understanding of what happened to Ni es Van Roeke to set the Imperfects into motion









PAGE TO SCREEN
These sample pages are
from the ficts issue of the
Marvel miniseries, written by rising Marvel
writer Greg Pak and
artist Ranato Arlem.
There's no dialogue here,
but it's easy to figure out
that Spidey, Thing,
Wolverine and Elektre
are hurting now.



As for the game, EA hasn't mentioned much, only that it's a fighter influenced by games such as Power Stone and War of the Monsters tin fact, while the screens may make the game look like it's based on the Def Jam Fight for NY engine, it's actually a totally new engine). And we're assuming that all of the Imperfects, of when two are named (Johnny Ohm and Brigade), are playable. The only confirmed Marvel characters are Spider-Man, Wolverine, and Iron Man (though, since the Thing and Elektra are specifically named as being part of the miniseries, we can assume they re in the game as well. Of course, superhero brawls are filled to the brim with property damage, so there will be destructible environments to simulate this. EA Canada is overseeing the project, while Nithlistic will be dong day-to-day development.

There's still a fair amount up in the air, and hopefully EA will show more signature Marvel heroes and prove that it can create interesting "EA heroes" to play as. Alas, this means you'l have to wait for a different game to simulate the *Need for Speed* cars fighting the Power Pack

EA Games Nihi istic Fall

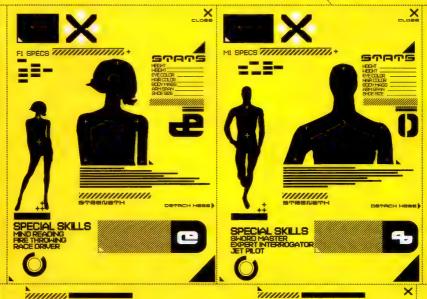




CHARACTER OPTIONS



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Sonic. Dante. Mega Man. Lara Croft. Each of these names evokes a vivid image in gamers' heads. And their capacity to do that is invaluable to companies that are doing everything they can to produce games that sell well. Having a recognizable character helps a game break through the noisy clutter on store shelves and stand out to people looking for some thing to play. The cost of game development increases annually-and the sharp cost jumps of developing for next-generation systems loom just around the corner-so high sales figures have become more important than ever for companies trying to make a profit

So, what makes a character memorable? Why do gamers instantly identify with some while others pass so quickly that no one even notices?

David Jaffe, the creative director for Sony Santa Monica, who has headed up games such as Twisted Metal and God of War, says, "Good game characters are like good comic book characters in that the best ones represent a key idea, a key theme-like a strong, silent type for Solid Snake, or a cocky, stylish badass for Dante

Keiji Inafune, the man behind Mega Man and producer of the Onimusha series, agrees. "The key to making a memorable character is keeping it simple," he says. When you think about basic trademarks and other designs that are meant to stay with you, they usually are very easy to understand. Making an overly complex character design often has an adverse effect by making the consumer not 'get' the character's appeal "

Jaffe agrees, "Good game characters, like good comic characters, also need a signature look, a cool costume with a hook - Dante's trench coat. for example. Yes, there are deeper, more complex characters in games but I think the ones that work the best are the simpler ones that convey a key theme or idea

The main issue is whether or not the player can make a connection with that character," adds Hideo Kojima, the creator of Solid Snake and the Metal Gear franchise. "To be a fictional hero, it must have believable human characteristics. These characteristics must resonate with the player in order for them to be empathetic with the character

It's not always solely about the character, though, says Insomniac's Ted Price, who originated three of gaming's more popular characters: Spyro, Ratchet, and Clank. "I think it has as much to do with the game as it does with the character," he says "A great character in a bad game will be less memorable than a not-so-great character in a great game

And sometimes, trying to focus on making something memorable isn't necessarily the right approach, opines Toby Gard, the creator of Lara Croft, "In general, it's probably easier to think about what makes a charac ter not memorable, which is mostly how similar they are in look and action to other characters

"This is, unfortunately, where the game industry often gets it wrong." Gard continues, "Publishers sensibly want their game characters to appeal to the widest possible audience, but often instead end up with wishy-washy characters that appeal to no one."

So, taking all this into account, by what actual process were some of gaming's most beloved figures created? There sino simple answer lit turns out that there are as many different methods as there are characters

In Inafune's experience, someone has to take the lead, "While a group may initially create a basic idea," he shares - the final design itself will ultimately fall on the shoulders of an individual

At other times, one person may come up with the initial idea but will then work with others to fine-tune it. "I come to the table with the vibe I want the character to have, the feeling I want him to give players, and the basic story," says Jaffe. "Then I work with many amazing artists who do many, many iterations until we can focus in on the perfect image that really represents the heart of the character. We probably went through 100 designs for Sweet Tooth for Twisted Metal Black We went through more than 300 for Kratos in God of War

Evan Wells, who heads up Naughty Dog (birthplace of Crash Bandicool and Jak and Daxteri, says that in his experience, "Creating a character is an extraordinarily collaborative effort. Team members responsible for each area will contribute ideas that add up to the final product. Without a motivating story or interesting abilities and game mechanics, the character isn't anything more than pencil lines on a page or polygons on the screen

It's interesting as a gamer playing as a new character for the first time to wonder about the people behind the scenes. What's going through developers' minds as they bring these figures to life? Are they thinking

THE BEST CHARACTERS REPRESENT A KEY IDEA.

beyond that moment of creation, wondering what the future might hold? In Gard's case, it was all about the here and now. "When I was making Lara. I wasn't really thinking much beyond the moment. Myself-and I think the whole team on the first Tomb Raider-were just caught up in the energy of creating something we thought was really cool. Everything that happened after that came as a bit of a surprise to all of us, I think

Knuma was equally surprised by his success. "Londain vid do't think Metal Gear, let alone Snake, would continue as long as it has," he says.

Wells' experience is different though it's always our goal to create franchisable characters " he says. Just through the process of developing who the character is, we create a universe and a history that are large

enough that we can't possibly explore all of it in one game."

And fellow Sony developer Insomniac comes into the process with a similar mindset. "With Ratchet and Clank," says Price, "our goal was to create a duo whose life span would stretch far beyond the first game and even the PS2 " He adds Of course we were a little nervous about how gamers would react to the origina. Ratchet & Clank game, but when it began selling really well, we breathed a collective sign of revef and knew that Ratchet and Clank would be around for a while."

Jaffe disagrees with that approach. You hope they are successful and that they resonate with players, but I try not to worry about anything other than the game I am working on ' he says "Games designed to be

ONE HIT WONDERS cometimes you can fall in love with a single look Which, in the case of some characters, is all we got. Some of the industry's biggest name share who they would

Toby Gard *Ben from Full Throttle."

want to see get an

Kniji Inalune "Super Jae. And if you know him, I'll give you some serious brownie paints!"

David Jaffe "I would love to see the kid from Ico again—he was pretty cool

Hideo Kojima "MGSI's Decoy Octopus."

Ted Price "Death in Conker's Bad Fur Day. And yes, I know that there's a 'new' version coming for Xbox, but that doesn't really count."

Evan Wells "I really enjoyed Ico and would like to see a game with those characters again."

Hirokazu Yasukara "If I had to say, Klayman in



franchises tend to feel a bit soulless in my opinion. They feel like a corporate decision, not an artistic one, and I think players can tell the difference. If it happens, it happens."

Hideki Kamiya, who worked with Tsuyoshi Tanaka on the creation of Dante, thinks looking too far ahead is putting the eart before the horse "We didn't want to get lahead of ourselves and think about sequels. If the character flopped, then there wouldn't be any follow-up after all." He adds. "But I do have to say that after making Dante, I felt he was such a cool character that it would be an waste not to use him again."

If a game is even modestly successful, it's fairly standard that gamers can count on seeing the protagonist make another appearance in a sequel. But has this practice of capitalizing on a familiar face become a crutch for publishers looking to make a quick buck? Jaffe thinks so. "Sequels should only get made if there is a real chance for progressing the game and if the gamemakers really feel compelled to make another version," he says "Otherwise, I am opposed—on a creative level—to sequels. They can be very good for business, so I understand the need. Still, its sucks."

Inafune also thinks that it's a lazy practice, one that's ultimately harmful to the quality of games. "Videogame characters are so central that it limits creativity and allows less originality in the long run."

But Price thinks that revisiting characters can actually allow developers to make a better game. "I think that established characters give game designers an opportunity to focus on being innovative," he argues. "I know that sounds a little oxymoronic, but there are so many hurdles associated with introducing a new character that designers can't take as many risks with the design as they'd like. Once gamers have embraced a character, designers can let loose more frequently."

"The problem with making an original game," adds Gard, "is that it's difficult for it to get noticed amongst the massive deluge of monthly releases. In some ways it's better to try to take an existing franchise in a new direction so that at least you will get shelf space, rather than release a new title and find that no one will stock it."

And as many people have pointed out, even if the game industry does make heavy use of sequels, that hardly makes it unique. "It's a common practice across all forms of entertainment," says Wells. "It's natural that if people have enjoyed a game, or book, or movie starring a particular cast of characters that they would want to play, or read, or watch another one with those same characters."

As much as people might hate it, ultimately, the bottom line has to be one of a company's main considerations, otherwise, it's likely that company won't be around to make any more games. "Despite grousing about lack of originality, gamers definitely gravitate toward characters and games they find familiar," points out Price "There is a huge demand for sequels to good games, and it just makes sense that the industry would first try to satisfy that demand and then take risks on new IP."

If it seems a financial inevitability that most characters will make multiple outings, then how do designers meet the challenge of keeping characters perpetually interesting to a critical audience? "I think they can be kept interesting," says Jaffe, "but they need to be renvented and transformed to keep with the times, both from a gameplay standpoint and a thematic standpoint. And the transformation needs to come from an inspired place, not because the bottom financial line is demanding it

'I still think the core of Lara Croft is very interesting, he continues "But they need to redo the mechanics of the game as well as adjust her character in order to keep her relevant to today's audiences. I think if you look at how many gamers are no longer as interested in Nintendo's Mario, although he is a brilliant, amazing character, you will see that even the best characters need to daptor it risk fairing from the public's mind."

'The Simpsons has been going for quite a while, and I still want to see more," points out Gard. "The challenge is in finding new, interesting things for the characters to be doing, but there are enough serialized char acters who enjoy continued success for us to be able to say it's possible."

Hirokazu Yasuhara, who was one of Sonic's creators and now works on the Jak games, also looks beyond the gaming industry for ideas on how to keep things fresh. "We can see good reference on Disney's characters. They have seen subtle additions and retouches for a long time. So if a character receives these kinds of 'changes," he or she will live longer." But, he warns, "If it is not changed at all (in game design, art style, or whatever), a character will have likely soent its like by the third sequel."

It's also obvious when a publisher is looking to milk the license over the wishes of the developer. Yasuhara says, "Usually, sequel titles have

"EVEN THE BEST CHARAC-TERS NEED TO ADAPT."

shorter development times, so [a decline in quality] can occur easily."

Gard adds, "The problem is, with crushing release schedules due to yearly sequels, you saturate the audience and destroy the team's ability to bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the development process."

Another way characters can lose their original spark is if a property gets transferred to a studio other than the one that originated it. Price knows: He watched that happen when Spyro, a character he helped create, was sold to Vivendi Universal. "The franchise may go to a different team that doesn't have the same love for the character—and that can certainly cause problems"

"Usually that is the case when an attempt to cash in on a popular series is made," interjects Wells. "A new developer will sometimes miss what the essence of the original game's success was. However, if enough time has passed and the character is presented in a brand-new way, it's possible to breathe new life into a franchise. Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time comes to mind."

The Prince is perhaps the perfect example of how there is always hope As inafune argues, "All characters have merit, even ones that seem like they only serve to annov."

Wells agrees "I believe in second chances. Even if a character seems played out, I always have hope that sometime in the future some clever designer will do something inspiring with them."

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Whatever the reason, some characters are more functions than interest was a considered from the state of the

Tohy Gard "Link. He's been around for a long time, and I still can't wait to check out his next adventure."

Keiji Inalune "Link from the Zelda series."

David Jaffe "Solid Snake has been around since the '80s and he still works. Maybe it's because as tech improves, we're able to go beyond the card-board-cutout espect of him that we first knew."

Ted Price "Unk—hands down. Nintendo has done a brilliant lob of immeenting Link over and over, and as a result, and over, and as a result, selda franchise has been one of the most enduring in this industry."

Evan Wells "Konami has done a great job with the Metal Gear franchise and Snake."

Hirokazu Yasukara "I would say it's Link in The Legend of Zeida."

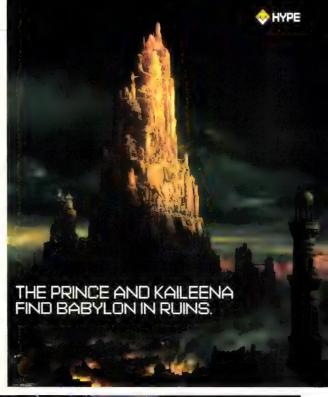
NCE OF PERSIA 3

Good for Ubisoft for proving that an original game character can be a big success in an age when the sequel is king. While Prince of Persia traces its roots all the way to the 1980s, as far as anyone in the current generation of gaming is concerned, 2002's Sands of Time was the Prince's debut That game turned out to be a huge critical success but fell far short of financial expectations. Time of year (it shipped in the notoriously crowded November), lack of buzz, and even, yes it's true, anti-Middle Eastern sentiment were cited as reasons for Sands of Time's lackluster performance.

Undaunted, Ubisoft followed up Sands of Time with last fall's Warrior Within, in which the Prince takes a much darker, bloodier turn. The Mrated reworking paid off as Ubisoft scored a double win, both critically and financially

Moving quickly to capitalize on that momentum, Ubisoft is readying Prince of Persia: Kindred Blades for a fall 2005 release. The basic plot picks up where Warrior Within left off: The Prince and Kaileena arrive in Babylon to find it nearly in ruins from war. The Prince discovers he is an unwelcome stranger in his hometown and learns what is behind this unexpected turn of events. By destroying the Sands of Time, he has sparked the rise of a darker, stronger self-the Dark Prince. In a fit of mistaken identity, the Prince's father (aka the King) seeks to kill his son, thinking he is the evil Dark Prince. Somewhere along the way, Kaiteena sacrifices herself for her dearly beloved (aka the Prince). Ah, true love.

Through a new open-ended game world, our Prince will leap, wall-run, climb, somersault, and rewind his way to an eventual solution...and undoubtedly lop off a few heads while he's at it. Ubisoft promises an improved combat system and the introduction of something it's calling "speed stealth," a concept that will be revealed in greater detail at a later date. The Dark Prince is reportedly a playable character with his own set of combat moves and combos. And good news for Sands of Time fans: Ubisoft plans to make the Prince more personal by having him share more of his thoughts and emotions like he did in Sands of Time ("No, that's not the way it happened"). Gone is Warrior Within's heavy metal soundtrack; a replacement is yet to be determined. Ubisoft promises more princely surprises in the coming months. Readers should expect a playable demo sometime in the fall.







PRINCE NOT SO CHARMING We don't know what he looks like (and Ubi isn't saving vet), but we do know that the Dark Prince is a more powerful and brutal version of the Prince we know and love. Oh, and the King wants him dead.













RATCHET: DEADLOCKED

What happens when interstellar heroes Ratchet and Clank are kidnapped and forced to participate in a series of to-the-death battles to be televised on an underground reality-TV show called *DreadZone*? Well, for one thing, Ratchet grows up in a hurry.

Deadlocked is the setting for this trial by fire, and before all you Ratchef fans start rolling your eyes at the "darker" tone of the game, you should hear where Insomniac is coming from. "The overwhelming consensus was that if we were going to do another [Ratchef game]," says Insomniac's vice president of gameplay, Brian Hastings, "we wanted to do something that was a challenge for us. We wanted to do something new. And so we thought, do we really want to save the galaxy from another maniscal villain, or is there something more personal or more intense we could do?

"We don't feel like we are going darker," he continues. "We're still a humorous game, which I think is the heart and soul of Ratchet. We're just going in a direction we feel is more unified, more sophisticated, li's a direction that we feel will appeal to an older crowd, but it still has the things to make it a lighthearted game and a fun experience."

Changes made to the gameplay include an expanded weapon system that allows players to customize Ratchet's weapons to a vast degree with a host of swappable modifications. The biggest addition, though, is likely to be Ratchet's robotic support squad: Through prelevel customization and a simple in-game command menu, Ratchet will be able to direct his teammates to perform tasks both general (providing covering fire, for

example) and specific (setting up a zip line to get him from one end of the arena to the other).

In addition, you'll be able to employ a live human to help you progress through the story mode via splitscreen or online co-op play. And, of course, with the success of 'Up 'Your Arsenai's online play, Deadlocked is making some serious strides in the area of eight-way multiplayer combat. The game will feature five online modes, including conquest, an update to UYA's siege mode. On top of that, you'll be able to commandeer five new vehicles, from streamlined versions of UYA's two-person rides to new monsters such as the Puma (sleek and speedy) or the Land Stalker (a walking tank).

In light of all these changes, you may think Deadlocked is "the new direction" for Ratchet, for better or worse. But don't be so sure; Insomniac is more likely to continue to reimagine the franchise than to continue in this particular vein. "We always want to challenge ourselves to do something new." says Hastings, "both for the sake of the team and for the audience. Kind of like Final Fantasy—it's a different story every time, and sometimes it's different art direction, but there are some things that make it a Final Fantasy game And with Batchet & Clank, there are a lot of things—the humor, the characters, the weapons—that make it a Ratchet & Clank game. But we're going to do what challenges us."

Sony CEA Insomplac Fa

LONBAXPLOTIATION
As you no doubt know,
As you no doubt know,
Aschetic is a lombax -a
fictional mamma from
the planet Veldin. But it
turns out that in Europe,
a lombax -s also a support gridle for men
tunfortunate come dence? Or buzare
inside joke? You make
the cau.



We should have seen Jak X coming. After a , Naughty Dog fo lowed up three blockbuster Crash games with the excellent Crash Team Racing J history is any guide, we can assume Jak X is a game meant to tide fans over while Naughty Dog quietly develops an entirely new technology pushing PS3 product

Which is not to say Jak X is not receiving the studio's full attention. Yes, it may appear that Naughry Dog simply grabbed the dune buggy physics from Jak 3 and threw them into their own game, but all it takes is one lap around one of the 20 wide, sprawling tracks to feel the difference Gone are the hypersensitive physics of Jak 3's oft-frustrating dune-buggy miss ons, replaced with smooth handling and a very noticeable sense of speed. Over the course of the game's 100-plus missions, you'll learn more about Jak, Daxter, and their pals, as well as some other key players in the Jak saga.

You won't just race against Jak's friends, though—you'll also be able to race against your own. The game will support six-way online multiplayer as well as two-player splitscreen. (And if you're concerned about Naughty

Dog's first foray into online play, don't be, at this early stage, the game is already running as smooth y as anyone could hope for I And while online, you'll be able to show off your personal your orgers through the single player game, you'll gain the ability to upgrade your vehicle's performance and appearance—as with a street racer, each player will have a unique vehicle.

We'll admit "Jak Team Racing" sounds a bit underwhelming on paper, but we found ourselves pleasantly surprised by how much fun the game was right off the bat and now easy it was to get into. But the question remains. Why another racing game? Naughty Dog copies dent Evan Wells says it was a no brainer. "Something that's all vays been part of the Jak universe is racing," net tells us. Even the earliest concepts behind the games. -ali of Jak's looks had these racing goggles, and Daxter had these flaps. It's allways been about racing, and it seemed like it was something in the richness that deserved its own game.

Sony CEA - Navobty Don - Ea L

DAX GETS HIS DUE

Naughty Dog recently let slip that a studio called Ready at Dawn is working an another grant in the Jak universe. Only this one will star Daxis tor—and it'll be on PSP. No further details are available, except this; According to Maughty Dog's Wells, while the two games are different, playing the Daxter game will let you open our terms in Jak X.

SLY 3: HONOR AMONG THIEVES

SLY, SLIER, SLIEST







It's comforting and even heartwarming to see Sly Cooper back in action: again. Gaming's favorite (only?) rescoon's quirky comic-book world, with its entertaining characters, story lines, and fun old-school play, has consistently drawn critical praise and, apparently, healthy sales.

At least healthy enough for Sony to continue supporting the franchise, and for Sucker Punch to stay inspired to keep *Sly* fresh. This fall will see the release of a third installment in the series, and while the look and feel will be familiar, fans should expect some interesting surprises in *Sly 3*: Honor Among Thieves.

First, a few plot spoilers: Those who got to the end of Siy 2 will recall the final battle with Clockwerk. That fraces landed Bentley in the hospital, In Siy 3 you'll find our heroic turtle confined to a wheelchair, though not at all unable to help his cohort in crime (Siy) track down the Cooper family fortune. Along the way, they'll recruit Murray, who had left the thieving life due to his guilt over the role may have played in Bentley's injuries. But wait, a rival gang is seeking the same fortune, and so the fun begins.

Sity 3 introduces aplitacreen head-te-head and co-op play, in one of asseral scenarios, you'll steathily sneak around a cityscape (Venice in this case) as Sity, nabbling treasure while the other player guides Comnelita to track you down and stop you. In an effective gameplay twist, Sity can dieguise himself as an object so foes will simply pass him by. Within the lavo-player mode, you'll pick up power-ups that will let you do things like high jumping or transporting. The introduction of a fun dogfighting (as in World War I biplanes) sequence in the single-player mode will hopefully make the cut as a multiplayer game.

New playable characters include Carmelita Fox and "lounge itzerd" Dimitri. A greater range of combat moves are promised for Sly and Murray, as well as for Bentley and his Swiss Army knife-like whoelchair (it has werything). OPM readers should expect a playable demo when Sly 3 sneaks into stores around November. 68

Pale. Sony CEA Boy. Sucker Punch Productions Release Fall





REINVENTING LARA: CAN EIDOS MAKE YÖU CARE ABOUT TOMB RAIDER AGAIN?

Lare Croft is ided of like a hot ex-giriffriend. Yoish sure, the breekup might have been ugly, but then you see her after a year or so, and she's looking pretty good, and she's giving you that look, so you decide to give things another try. And before you know it, you're sitting in some bar crying in your beer because your heart's been broken again.

So will Crystal Dynamics help cure Lara of her man-esting www? Eidosicertainly hopes so, because a financial disappointment would mean a big hit to the company's bottom line. Eidos is not unaware of this, which is parhaps why Chip Blundell, vice president of brand management for Eidos, seems a bit nervous when we sit down to talk with him.

"We can't afford not to make a great game," he tells us. One of the finite things the team did was sit down and discuss the brand values of *Torno Raider*. It turns out that *Torno Raider* as franchise stands for a lot of things, many of which are fairly standard for action games (entertainment, action, Intelligence in problem solving). However, there are values that actually help distinguish Lars from other action heroes—specifically,

tomb raiding, gunpley, and travel to excito locales. But the most important thing they realized, as Blundell puts it, is that "It's not our brand." What he means is that Lara actually belongs to gemers. What do generewant? Gamers went a return to those things that made Lara unique.

So Crystal is going back to the franchise's roots. Though Angel of Devinees was originally supposed to be the first installment of a new Lars trillogy, that story line has been excapped and the team is starting over. The acreens that have been released so far for Legend look much less gothic than Angel of Derkness does. As you can see here, Lars is back in her natural habitat—clambering through remote locations and raiding those tombs she's made so farmous. And one of the most immediate changes gamers should notice about Legend is to the control scheme, which is not surprising since Angel of Derkness' wes criticized for being, well, strocious. "What we do with Lars needs to be done better than other third-person action games," says Blundell. And if that means the control scheme needs a complete overhaul, then that is what the team will do.















The story line is being kept under wraps for the time being, but the action component is going to be increased, which means the overall page of the game should pick up as a result. And given the core values of the brand (well, that and the screenshots on this page), we will go out on a limb and predict that adventuring in tombs will comprise at least a portion of the action. As for any other details, you'll have to wait will everyone else to see what Crystal-and Lara-have in store.

Frankly, however, the plot is of secondary import in most gamers' minds. What they really want to know is if Lara will be fun to be with again. Because, for better or for worse, that is something no amount of brand managing can disguise.

Pub. Eidos Dev. Crystal Dynamics Release Q1 2000





MAKE ME OVER

One of the first things Eidos did was give Lara a maxeover, providing wardrobe hairstyle and accessory updates. The cosmetic changes aside (a Vineck has been added to the shirt, the shorts are cut a bit higher on the legithe most significant change is to the type of gun Lara has hoistered on her supple thighs. Rather than the Desert Eagles she has used in previous Tomb Raiders, she's now sporting a pair of 9mm pistols instead

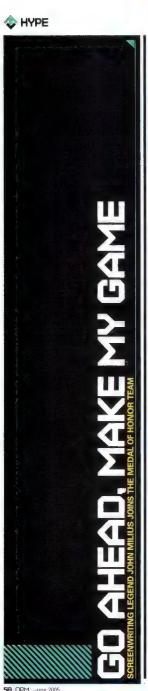
Why the switch? Well, we're theorizing that Lara was just fired of carrying those neavy cannons around. Desert Eagles are pretty unwieldy weighing in at a most four pounds each. The smaller caliber gun, on the other hand, is much lighter a fully loaded standard Glock, for example, weighs less than two pounds. And it's still plenty power ful-9mm pistols are the standard issue our for a majority of law enforcement officers

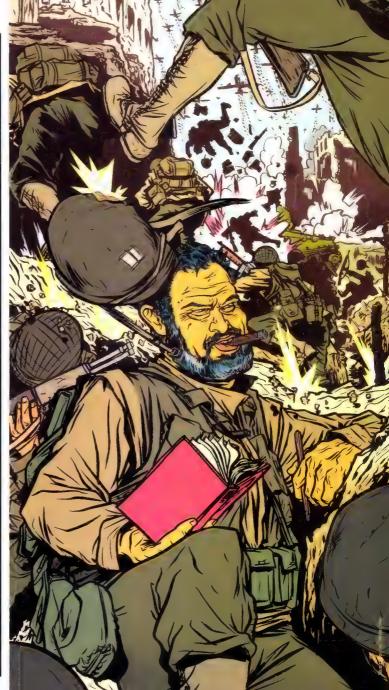


"EASILY THE MOST ENJOYABLE FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER AVAILABLE FOR THE PS2."









llypse Now, The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean, The Wind and the Lion—these are the stuff of film legend, and only a legend could be behind them. John Milius has written, directed, and produced films and TV shows for some 40 years. Blame him for introducing "Go shead, make my day," and "I love the smell of napalm in the morning" into the American pop-culture lexicon.

But it was Milius' expertise in military history and his ability to build cinematic experiences that caught the attention of Electronic Arts and the Medal of Honor: European Assault development team. He recently joined them to put the finishing touches on the game, and he recently joined OPM to explain how he got into games and why he may stay.

OPM You've penned some of the most acclaimed movies of all time. Why videogames?

JOHN MILIUS Well, it seemed like a good thing to do, and friends of mine said, "Gee, you'd really like games," and I used to play these war games when I was a kid, table games like Gettysburg and Blitzkrieg

OPM The Avalon Hill games?

JM Yeah. Panzer Leader, games like that. I loved those games. I loved the dea that you could refight the Guadalcanal campaign. Or you could refight some Napoleonic campaign. And the same ideas apply to lyideogamingl: You learned a tremendous amount about history playing those games. But (videogames have) taken it to a much greater level

OPM Have you actually played any videogames?

JM I played a game with Spielberg called Aces over Europe

OPM We remember it

JM And of course, with Aces over Europe you could have different lev els of complexity. You could be a raw recruit in a kind of so-so airplane fighting another raw recruit. Or you could be in the very best P-51 Ameri can airplane fighting the great German ace Gunther Rall in an Me-262 and he would always shoot you down very quickly. I remember Spielberg saying that I could learn to play this until I finally shot (Rall) down. What would I have done at the end? I'd go out in the sun and I'd say "I did it. I shot down Gunther Rall!" Then I'd say, "What have I done?"

OPM How are you being used in the making of Medal of Honor European Assault?

JM The development team uses me very effectively. They say, "Tell these stories of history. Tell how you might get us to Stalingrad 'What's good about it is I'm not sitting there trying to say, "OK, I'm just writing a scene." It's a collaborative effort. We all sit around and talk about it. They go off and take this stuff that I've given them, and they employ it into the game

OPM But it's obviously much different from what you're used to in movies JM Ultimately, it'd be more like doing a television series, because you've got the ability to tell a story theoretically over a long period of time. You can tell a lot of different facets (of the story), whereas a movie has to be contained. When you're writing a movie, you're alone. And you're just thinking of the shape of the movie. In a game, you're thinking of the shape of the whole story, of the whole historical context that it goes into

OPM You've both directed and written for the big screen. Do you rely on one discipline more than the other when approaching games? JM I'm mostly just storytelling

OPM So which comes first for you, the character or the subject matter? JM It's really the subject matter, then how the character will apply to that. The characters come out of the subject

OPM Of the characters you've created, is there a central driving force that they share? If so, is this a construct that can be applied to the characters in Medal of Honor?

JM Oh, sure. All the characters that are any good in anything have human foibles and human limitations, and are swept up in a great event of history, and just swept along in the great river of history. That's all that makes a good story. And so what's interesting is that you follow some body through that, and hopefully there's some reason for telling the story, that something is accomplished, so that you, hopefully, at the end of the day, go, "Well, this has some meaning to it." The only reason we have all this stuff is because we're trying to give life a meaning. And all dramatizal tion, novels, and recordings of history are supposed to do that.

OPM Do you have a favorite World War II battle or story?

JM Oh, absolutely. The best story in World War II, bar none, and it is probably the best battle in history to study-you can never know enough about it, it is the very best human battle ever fought is Stalingrad

It has just the most wonderful arrogant villain and the impossibility of it to start with. Stalingrad is so far from where the war starts that the peo ple are completely oblivious and convinced that this will never be part of their lives. And then they become the focal point of the whole war

You have that, you have the enemy. There's nothing more heroic than a Communist people's defense, either, where everybody is involved and everybody is fighting for the great Motherland. And you have in that battle the greatest revenge. You have weather Stalingrad is everything. I could do a whole game on Stalingrad I could do 10 movies

OPM Compared to other wars, is World War II more or less compelling as a war upon which to base a game?

JM I can't think of any other war that's as good as World War II, because it has such great villains and such great heroes and just the right amount of technology-really neat-looking airplanes, machine guns are better looking than in any other war. The artiflery, the tanks—they have personality

OPM But some of your best movies, like Judge Roy Bean and Jeremiah Johnson, have been set in the American West

JM Well, there are three great American myths, and one of them's the Old West. One of them's World War II. And the third one is the Mafia.

OPM And World War II is a great myth because

JM Because it's the New World coming to save the Old, it's the New World saying, "We came here with this egalitarian society of farmers and cattlemen and cowboys and gangsters. We're gonna come to your decadent society of aristocrats and knights and peasants and all that Every thing's gone wrong there, and we're gonna come and save it, and we're



MEDAL OF HONOR: **EUROPEAN** ASSAULT The storied first-person shooter series brings us to the European theater in 1942 in Medal of Honor: European Assault. You'll play U.S. Army Lieutenant William Holt, the first field agent of the newly formed Office of Strategic Services (the OSS, precursor to the CIA). Painstakingly historically accurate, European

player missions. Pub. Electronic Arts Dov. EA Los Amgeles

Assault will include

single-player and multi-

"IN A GAME, YOU'RE THINKING OF THE SHAPE OF THE WHOLE STORY

not gonna ask anything for that. We're gonna drive through the streets when we save it and throw candy to the people, instead of rape and pillage. And when we're done, we're going to give you money to rebuild all your cities. And for that, as long as you're alive, you'll screw us over "

OPM How would you compare making a game versus making a movie? JM Much better people

OPM Was Coppola that tough?

JM Oh, no, that was the good part. Believe me. That was when we were young, that part was great. It's just deteriorated since then. You're in Hollywood long enough, you get very, very cynical about the human condition. There was a great story where [Robert] Mitchum was arrested for smoking dope and he was put in jail in Palm Springs. And when they let him out, he was asked. How was it being in jail, Bob?" And he answered, "I was with a much better class of people than I'm used to

He wasn't kidding

OPM So you like the games business

JM I love going down to EA. The people are just young people, just working. They're really motivated, they love what they're doing, they're really excited. Some guy comes running up to me and he says, "What do you know about an FG 42? mean this guy's discovered some obscure weapon, and he's thrilled about it. And "Look, I got pictures, isn't that neat looking?' It's wonderful to see

What was really exciting was that everybody was so intrigued with his tory itself. You don't find that in movies. You find people saying, if you say, "I want an FG-42," they'll answer, 'Well, where do we rent one of those?"

OPM Were you at USC when George Lucas was there? JM Yes. We were among four or five other graduates he and I

OPM Do you keep in touch with him?

JM Not really. He's sort of gone off into his own world, like Montezuma.

MILIUS FILMOGRAPHY

John Milius has been nvolved in some 30 file A few of his more notable

(1972 - wrote) The Life and Ti ind and the Line (1975 - wrote and directed) on Marc (1979 - wrote and execu-

(1979 - story) Conun the Ha (1962 - wrote and directed) (1984 - wrote and directed)

tive produced)



NEG SHEMITIVE

other sports leagues, the National Basketball Association has entered into agreements with Electronic Arts, Midway, Atari, Take Two, and Sony in regard to NBA-licensed basketball games. The terms of the agreements are unusual for the industry but indicate some dynamic thinking on the NBAs part.

Both Take Two and Electronic Arts will be able to release yearly simulation style basketball games on multiple platforms, meaning the ZK senes and the Live series will still be going head-to-head with each other. Mean white, Sony can continue to release its own simulation basketball game yearly on the PSZ. Militway and Electronic Arts have the ability to produce arcade style basketball games, but the companies will rotate their releases each year. MBA Street will come out one year, with NBA Ballers taking its place the following year. Additionally, those looking for a simplified version of biball will be happy to know that Atari can release its Back yard Basketball games on a yearly basis.

The amount of money involved is around \$400 million, but the NBA will have the ability to make some extra money through in-game advertising. The league plans to sell ads on billiboards and other areas of an areaa, much like it would for an actual game. Perhaps the NFA, and now the NCAA, both of which have signed exclusive contracts with Electronic Arts, should ve taken advantage of the situation instead of throwing all of their eggs into one basket.



THE NCAA DEAL

Some people remember where they were when they heard Kennedy was shot; I remember

Some people remember where they were when they heard Kennedy was shot; I remember where I was when I heard about the Square Enix merger. It was November 26, 2002, and I was in the second day of an English teachers' conference here in Japan. I was trying not to fall asleep during a presentation on classroom discipline when I got a cell-phone mell from a friend: "SOUARE + ENIX 2 MERGE."

"Holy crap!" I said out loud. The other teachers' eyes all turned to me. "Uh...Square and-Enix are merging," I said.

"Holy crap!" said Josh, a fellow gamer. Everyone else looked confused and uncomfortable.

But the merger (acquisition, really; Enix bought Square) was big news. Not just because of the obvious narrative twist—two longtime rivals team up to make games together!—but because of what it implied about the belaquered. Japanese industry. Square, despite its Final Fantasy franchise, was in dire need of a cash infusion, and Enix needed titles to fill its balance.

ANDREW VESTAL

lives in Tokyo and works in game translation. You can check out more of his game knowledge at www.tUP.com

sheet between *Dragon Quest* releases. Both companies specialized in role-playing games; surely, this was a match made in heaven.

That was two years ago\ How have things turned out for this new Japanese megacorporation? From a financial standpoint, things are just peachy; the company has reported strong profits each quarter, and the next sarnings sheet, featuring Dragon Quest VIII, should be the best yet.

But from a development standpoint, the merger has yielded few benefits, with virtually no crossover between the staff of the two companies. Part of the reason might be Enix's continued reliance on outsourced development: Dragon Quest VIII was made by Level-5, Radiata chise flogging. Tent pole releases like Final Fantasy XII and Kingdom Hearts II are running nearly a year behind schedule and have no set release dates. The Final Fantasy VII spin-offs and Nintendo DS titles have had so few details, announced that they might as well not exist. Under Enix's watch, Square's creators have had trouble, well, creating.

Some of Square's talent has set off in search of greener pastures, with the highest profile departure being Final Fantasy series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi. His Mistwalker studio habeen headhunfing within Square Enis with a promise of "old Square-style management," suggesting that the new Enix-style management.

SQUARE'S CREATORS HAVE HAD TROUBLE, WELL, CREATING.

Stories by Tri-Ace, and the upcoming Grandia III is from Game Arts. Instead of "borrowing" Square staffers, Enix franchises have stuck to their traditional external teams. This separation from the day-to-day details of the merger explains why "Enix side" games have continued to meet their expected release dates.

The "Square side," on the other hand, has seen incredible turnoil. After a strong PS2 start with Final Fantasy X and Kingdom Hearts, Square since the merger has only managed to produce a few handheld games and B-list fran-

has ruffled a few feathers.

Though Square Enix is certainly stronger financially than either company was alone, management hiccups have led to severe delays and an end-of-generation glut of content. In the end, the merger was still a good idee, but even good ideas need careful planning to reach their full potential. The greatest challenge of next-gen software development isn't programming or art, but managing the 300-person teams these projects require. Trust that "things will work out eventually," and you could be in for a wait.

HE'S AN ANGLER'S WORST NIGHTMARE!



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INE IS NOW DECLARED BIG HUMANOID ROBOT MONTH

SEED KEEPS GROWING

While Gundam Seed is about to finish its run on the Cartoon Network, Bandai is reloading another salvo of modern Mobile Suit for this summer. Not long after the 10th and final Seed volume arrives in stores on May 10, three compilation movies of the new Gundam series will hit the States

The three movies, which are similar to Bandai's condensations of the 1979 Gundam TV show, provide a compressed retelling of the full series with several extra scenes added. Each of the three 94-minute films features between 15 and 20 minutes of new footage, and Bandai also plans to include "Beyond the Stars," an epilogue providing more closure to the series. Whether you're a fan who wants a complete collection or you're looking to consume the films in a more economical package, they should be worth taking a closer look at.

Bandai is also fast-tracking the American release of *Gundam Seed Destiny*, the TV sequel series that's currently airing in Japan. Set two years after the original show's conclusion, *Destiny* delivers amped-up animation and a far more complex plot in the grand tradition of

Zeta Gundam. Though Bandai won't say exact by when it's coming jother than sometime "soon"), it'll be worth the wait so far, the series has proven to be one of the best mecha shows in years.

MOBILE SUIT, MEET MOBILE POLICE

Meanwhile, a different factor of robot attents continuing to make its way out of Central Park Media Another corner of the *Patlabor* franchise hits DVD on June 14 with the first volume of the *New Files* OVA series.

"Patlabor" is short for "patrol labor,"—for "labor," read "big humanoid robot." The story of a Tokyo police division dedicated to battling mechanized crime, it dates to the in between period from 1988 to the early '90s, when the space-opera style of *Gundam* gave way to more varied and quirky robot shows. The show is driven by a team full of future stars including Mamoru Oshii and Kazunori Ito, who are, respectively, the director and screenwriter of *Ghost in the Shell*) and blends drama, action, and comedy against a background that's very much like the real world—except, of course, for all the big humanoid robots. While they require some grounding in the more serious TV series, the New Files episodes are some of the show's most entertaining, including a cracking four-part action story and several hilarious parody one-shots (sending up Akira, Ultraman, and the PC dungeon-hack classics Wizardry, among others). Don't miss the chance to check them out, along with more of the Patlabor that's already available on DVD from CPM.

DAYS AND DATES

Patlabor features the mecha designs of Yutaka Izubuchi, whose excellent modern mecha epic RahXephon comes out in a chaep \$90 collected edition on May 17. Planetes. Volume One, profit ed last month, now has a firm June 14 release date. The Read or Die TV series ends with a bang (plus a collectors' box and Anita King action figure) when volume seven hits on June 21. Finally, though the DVD is out and selling quite well alongside Porce Rosso and The Cat Returns, Disney plans to send Hayao Miyazaki's Nausicaa out for a small theatrical release, so watch for a chance to see it on the silver screen this summer. & Dave Smith

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BY THE NUMBERS SALES, RENTALS, TRENDS, AND ODDITIES—THE STATS THAT SHAPE YOUR VIDEOGAME WORLD

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1UF	'S IO MOST WANTED F	S2 GAMES 📓
1	GTA San Andreas	Rockstar
2	FF VII: Advent Children	Square Enix
3	SOCOM 3	Sony CEA
4	Gran Turismo 4	Sony CEA
5	Mittinight Club 3	Rockstar
6	The Godfather	EA Games
7	NFS Underground 2	EA Games
8	Final Fantasy XII	Square Enix
9	Playboy The Mans on	Arush
10	God of War	Sonv CEA

JA	PAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES	
1	WE8 Liveware Evolution	Konami
2	Tekken 5	Namco
3	Wild Arms 4th Detonator	Sony CEI
4	Dynasty Warriors 5	Koei
5	Makai Kingdom	Nippon ichi
6	Shining Force Neo	Sega
7	One Piece Grand Battle! Rush	Bandai
8	Enthusia Professional Racing	Konami
9	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms X	Koei
10	NANA	Konami

PS2 TOP 20 SALES

v	Title (Publisher)	Score
1	God of War (Sony CEA)	****
2	Gran Turismo 4 (Sony CEA)	*****
3	MVP Baseball 2005 (EA Sports)	****
4	Devil May Cry 3 (Capcom)	*******
5	Fight Night Round 2 (EA Sports)	00001
6	Tekken 5 (Namco)	****
7	MX vs. ATV Unleashed (THQ)	****
8	Major League Baseball 2K5 (2K Games)	****
9	Brothers in Arms (Ubisoft)	***
10	Dynasty Warriors 5 (Koei)	0001
11	Dragon Ball Z: Sagas (Atari)	001
12	NARC (Midway)	4
13	NBA Street V3 (EA Sports)	00001
14	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (Ubisoft)	00000
15	NCAA March Madness 2005 (EA Sports)	****
16	NBA Live 2005 (EA Sports)	10000
17	MLB 2006 (Sony CEA)	****
18	Musashi Samurai Legend (Square Enix)	000
19	FIFA Soccer 2005 (EA Sports)	****
20	Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Rockstar)	20000

PS	P TOP 10 SALES	
1	Untold Legends	SOE
2	Twisted Metal: Head-On	SCEA
3	Wipeout Pure	SCEA
4	NFS Underground Rivals	EA
5	Metal Gear Acid	Konami
6	Lumines	Ubisoft
7	THUG2 Remix	Activision
8	Ridge Racer	Namco
9	Tiger Woods PGA Tour	EA
10	Dynasty Warriors	Koei





ı	TUF	IU KENTALS, ALL SYSTEM	15
	1	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (XB)	Ubisoft
	2	DBZ: Sagas (PS2)	Atari
	3	Gran Turismo 4 (PS2)	Sony CEA
	4	God of War (PS2)	Sony CEA
	5	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (PS2)	Ubisoft
	6	MX vs ATV Unleashed (PS2)	THQ
	7	GTA: San Andreas (PS2)	Rockstar
	8	Republic Commando (XB)	LucasArts
	9	Fight Night Round 2 (PS2)	EA Sports
	10	NBA Street V3 (PS2)	EA Sports





Source EB Games March 2005 Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated out ets and don't include other retail outlets. That a probably with you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10 Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rehals come from other sources Game descriptions written by the *DPM* staff Most Wanted sources. Americasmostwanted com, CNN, Scholastic

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DESTRUCTION
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accessory for videogene
characters appears to be
a gipantic Made
weapon. Kratos, Danés,
Zasalamal, Rau—all tho
col kids are sporting
cutilary-edge weaponry,
But you should probably
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mom before yeu ge initating there.



The rank of the Cadillac Escalade EXT on the list



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copies, in millions, that will be printed for the first run of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.



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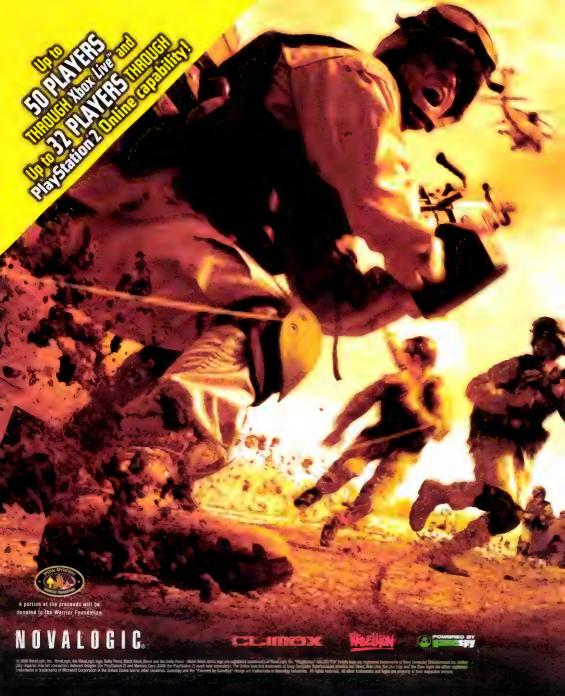








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PlayStation.2











Language Violence



It might be hard to believe, but actual real-live people are behind the consoles and games you play every day. From company executives to designers, they affect your gaming world through the decisions they make concerning technology, stories, characters, and just smart business. We couldn't do without them, and neither could you. Here, in no particular order, are OPM's picks for 2005's PlayStation people who will have the greatest impact on the most important people in PlayStation gaming; you.

Illustrations by **eBoy**









DIGITAL HOUSE YES

who is HE? He's the executive producer of EA's upcoming Godfather game

OH YEAH. THOSE MAFIA MOUES. EA's pulling out all the stops for this game, even ponying up the cash so it can use the voice talents of major actors from the films including Marlon Brando, James Caan, and Robert De Niro. A nice piece of irony: The Godfather trilogy could legitimately be argued to be the father of controversial videogame heavy weights such as the Grand Theft Auto series, and now the Godfather game will be in direct competition with them

IF WE REFUSE? This game has already generated its share of controversy, and its success or failure will affect much more than just EA's bottom line. This game is expected to be a block buster: If it succeeds, it could mean the few remaining small publishers will be in jeopardy, as they!! Ih ave a hard time funding games that require that fat of a bankfoll. The Godfather's success will also mean gamers can count on a lot more games based on licenses of classic movies.



WHO IS HE? He's the creator of Gran Turismo and president of Polyphony Digital.

CAN HE KEEP THE LEAD? Yamauchi has done for racing games what EA has done for football games. The *Gran Tur-Ismo* series has grown so much over the past few years that it's become a staple of the automotive lifestyle. Car enthusist magazines devote large amounts of coverage to it, and auto manufacturers actively pursue Yamauchi and the team to get their cars in *Gran Tursmo* games. But with the release of the fourth game, there are a lot of questions up in the air, specifically revolving around the lack of online play—which looks like it may not be coming at all

NHAT'S HE DOING INSTEAD? There's the PSP Gran Turismo game, and after see ing what Polyphony can do with aging PlayStation 2 hardware, we're excited to see what it does with Sony's portable system Still, Polyphony needs to keep an eye on its rearview mirror, with games like the Need for Speed series coming up that could potentially take the racing crown.



WHO IS HE? He's the brains behind Grand
Theft Auto and the president of Rockstar

At The ORGINAL GANDSTER. It's not easy being the driving force behind one of the most popular series of games ever created. The amount of pressure to keep it fresh and entertaining, especially with all of the me-too games out there, is enough to drive anyone insane. But Houser and his group have been able to keep Grand Theft Auto at the top of its game by focusing on different themes for each installment and keeping the story entertaining enough to keep the experience of jacking cars and shooting an assortment of lowly individuals interesting.

WHAT'S NEXT? Well, there's a PSP version of Grand Theft Auto coming out this fall, which will mark the first mee the series has had the ability to replicate the console experience on the small screen And it's a given that the next console GTA will show up on next-gen consoles. For the moment, details sur rounding both games are a closely guarded secret

Sirc market and a literated to

WHO IS HE? He's the new CEO of Sony (worldwide), the first Westerner to hold the position. Before that, he was the CEO of Sony Corporation of America.

IALL THAT AFFECT THE PLAYSTATION

MORLD? It seems likely The New York

Times quoted Stringer as criticizing Sony
managers, saying, "The business of
Sony has become management, not
product design." Add to that the fact that
Sony's stock has been slipping due to
lackluster hardware sales, and you could
see big changes in the Sony infrastructure—which could affect who is involved
in upcoming PlayStation decisions

MCSS Well, the bright spot is that gaming is where Sony's big money is—44 percent of the company's profit in the last quarter of 2004 was from videogame sales, and the PSP's initial sales forecasts are rosy. But with Microsoft and Nintendo breathing down Sony's neck with their respective next-gen consoles, plus a potentially debilitating lawsuit by Immersion Corporation over the DualShock controller (see page 26), we say good luck, Sir Howard—you may need it











KEN KUTARAGI

WHO IS HE? Kutaragi is the father of the PlayStation brand and the CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment.

CALL HEM PR. PLAYSTATION. With the PSP successfully out the door and into the hands of millions of drooling fans, Kutaragi can focus on his big project, which is none other than the PlayStation 3 and its Cell chip. The PlayStation is consumer security important to Sony as its consumer electronics divisions have continued to lose money.

The news isn't all good, though Kutaragi was rumored to be the choice to become the next CEO of parent company Sony Corporation. In early March, however, it was announced that Sony's board of directors had appointed Sir Howard Stringer, who was the CEO of Sony Corporation of America (see page 69), to the position. Kutaragi was also removed from Sony Corporation's board of directors.

LINY BIOL HE GET PASSED QUERP Unofficial spin from Sony has been that they wanted him to focus on PlayStation 3 But it's also possible that they liked Sir Howard's extensive experience in corporate positions at other companies. Sony has recently acknowledged that its loss of market share may be due to errors in judgment, and Stringer may be more likely to make the sweeping changes necessary than Kutaragi, whose entire career has been with Sony.

ILL HE LEAVE? No. Sir Howard has publicity praised Kutaragi for his creativity, saying in The Wall Street Journal that Sony has a need for his "brilliance in residence," and Kutaragi himself has said to the Japanese press that he will remain with Sony.











"I'VE MADE UP STUFF THAT'S TURNED OUT TO BE REAL."









KING OF NEED

WHO IS HE? He's a producer at Square Enix

kIHY DOES HE MATTER? He only happens to be the main man behind Squenix's biggest franchise No, not Final Fantasy but Dragon Quest. As huge as Final Fan tasy is, it didn't cause the Japanese Diet (Japan's legislative body) to pass a law forbidding it to be released on a week day (since kids would skip class to buy Dragon Quest garnes). In fact, the Dragon Quest series has outperformed both Final Fantasy and Kingdom Hearts on sales charts in Japan

IAGN. Weah. Whether it's the ingenious use of Level-5 to produce a lush graphical update to the franchise or providing the same mix of old-school yet deep RPG mechanics. Horn's work on Dragon Quest VIII is solid evidence that he knows RPGs. With the sequels to those other franchises caught in a variety of delays, Horn's title could end up being the Squenix bright spot this year And this time Americans might finally figure out just how important he is to the RPG landscape.



WHO IS HE? He's the director of Kingdom Hearts II and an all-around drawing guy

SO HHAT'S HIS DEAL? Nomura is one of the most important visual artists in the industry today, thanks to his work as the character designer for most of Square Enix's titles, as the director of Kingdom Hearts, and for his contributions to several current projects, including Kingdom Hearts II, Final Fantasy VII: Advant Children, and Final Fantasy VII: Dirge of Cerberus (along with a bunch of other unannounced games). And you have to admire a guy who's made multiple belt buckles a fashionable trend for videogame characters.

I-HAT'S UP HITH KINGDOM HEARTS IP Squenix wouldn't officially comment, but word is that Nomura suffered a supernastly flu last year, which was one reason for the big delay Squenix is probably going to make an official announcement to elaborate on Kingdom Heart IF, "TBD" release date, but our guess is it's coming in either right at the end of the year or possibly even early next year.



WHO IS HE? He's the president of Take Two Interactive

CAN HE DO IT? Eibeler and Take-Two have one very clear goal in mind-to overtake Electronic Arts as the leading third-party publisher in the world, It's no small task to be sure. Even though the company has the highest selling console series (Grand Theft Auto) as its foundation Eibeler knows that it needs to crack the sports market in order to achieve that position. That's why the company bought Visual Concepts from Sega as well as other developers to help bolster its sports development roster. Take Two has since gone on to make an aggres sive deal with Major League Baseball, which bars any other third party pub lisher from making a licensed baseball game, and its agreement with the NBA ensures that the popular 2K series of basketball games will continue for years to come. Of course, there still remains the issue of football, arguably the most popular of the three main sports, but Eibeler and Visual Concepts undoubt edly have something up their sleeves to combat EA's exclusive NFL license

Tu-ju-ju-ju-ju

WHO IS HE? The best-selling author of political techno-thrillers like Patriot Games and The Hunt for Red October. You might also have noticed his name preceding the titles of games like Splinter Cell, Ghost Recon, and Rainbow Six

BUT IS HE REALLY INVOLVED IN THE GAMESP. According to Ubisoft, Clancy and his team work closely with the developers to create the concepts and story lines, and they continue to evaluate games throughout the development process. Plus, all three console-based Clancy series have proven to be extremely innovative in areas of tactical play, realism, and, especially, multiplayer competition. Splinter Cell Pandora Immercow, in particular, shook up online multiplayer in a big way.

ISI TREALLY THAT BIG OF A DEAL? The Spinter Cell tranchise has sold over 3 million copies, and the Clancy games as a group generated nearly \$400 million in sales for Ubisoft to date. He may not be single-handedly keeping Ubisoft afloat, but his properties contribute a huge chunk to the company's bottom line.











"WE'RE ALWAYS JUST TRYING TO MOVE THE EXPERIENCE FORWARD."









Marcon Company

WHO IS HE? The chief technology officer at Sony Computer Entertainment and the designer of the PSP you're probably holding right now.

WHAT CAN'T IT DO? The PSP is an amazing little piece of hardware. From its huge screen to its multimedia capabili ties, it includes just about everything you could want in a portable entertain ment product, and you can thank Chatani for that He, along with Kutaragi and other technical team members. helped make the PSP not only a serious contender to the throne of the handheld gaming market, but also a threat in the digital-music arena. It may not be able to take on Apple's iPod directly, but how can you resist the appeal of a device that plays games, movies, and music, as opposed to something that costs just as much (or more) and plays only music?

VEALITS PRETTY COOL. The PSP hasn't been a tough sell so far, which is good news for Sony's electronics division. You can plan on seeing a lot more of this sexy device, since it could be what turns Sony's hardware sales back around



NHO ARE THEY? The new copresidents of Sony studio Naughty Dog, who you may remember from such series as Crash Bandicoot and Jak and Daxter They took over management of the studio following the much-talked-about departure of cofounder Jason Rubin.

BUT IDNT PLAY PLATFORMES. It doesn't matter. While Naughty Dog is known for making great games that platform fans love, they are equally known for the technology that goes into those games—perhaps even more so. Crash did things with the PS1 that no one at thought possible. The first Jak and Daxter introduced a huge, beautiful, seamless game world that simply rocked the PS2 development scene

NHAT ARE THEY WORKING DN NDMP Right now, they're working on Jak X, a racing game based in the Jak universe, but if history is any indicator, this is merely a stopgap game to title fans over while the studio devotes most of its effort to a next-generation product. The smart minority is on Naughty Dog being on the vanguard of PS3 technology.



N-HDIS HE? The senior producer for the SOCOM series, Lusi worked with devel oper Zipper Interactive and the U S Navy to create a game that was both representative of the SEAL experience and a hell of a good time to play, Realism and fun are not an easy mix.

IS THAT A BIG DEAL? Not in itself, perhaps, but the series has a broader legacy: SOCOM launched the PS2's online initiative pretty much single-handedly and continues to carry it to this day Over a year and a half since its release, SOCOM its till log 30,000 players a day—roughly the same as when it launched. In other words, SOCOM is the online powerhouse, a trend that is only going to continue with the release of SOCOM 3 this fall

I-HAT'S NEXT? Rumors are already circulating about a PSP version, and it's a virtual certainty that we'll see the game very early on the next generation PlayStation For now, though, the focus is squarely on SOCOM 3. Look for an exclusive report on the game's online options next month in CPM.

LIPPLU AND

WHO IS HE? A founding member of the original Xbox team, Allard is the guy in charge of the next gen Xbox

UHLLISHT THIS ABOUT PLAYSTATION? Sony has soundly beaten Microsoft in total units sold for the current generation of consoles, but even die-hard PlayStation fans will admit that Xbox Live kicked the pants off PlayStation's online service. Sony has further let down connected gamers by removing promised online options from recent games, including *Gran Turismo 4*.

While details on the next generation of consoles are still sketchy, Microsoft has announced that all games for the next-gen Xbox must be Live aware, and the company continues to encourage developers to include online play.

CAN SONY CATCH UP? While less than 5 percent of U.S. households had broad band in 2000, that figure is expected to top 56 percent by 2008. Online access will certainly be one of the major influences as people pick their systems, to be successful, Sony needs to figure out how to beat Microsoft at its own game.











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ROCKED BY HUGE PREAKERS, YOU MUST
STEADY YOUR NERVES - AND AIM - TO EVADE
A WATERY SHAVE

FuyStations / streethet shows

Blood and Gore Intense Violence Language

MayStat



DARKWORKS



UBISOFT

"A POPULAR CHARACTER WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE SEQUELS."









HILL -

WHO IS HE? He's the director of the Metal Gear Solid franchise.

WHY DOES HE MATTER? His drive to meld movies and games is still a big influence on game designers today. Even if you can't stand his oddball story lines, you have to admire how he fuses stories with fine tuned stealth action game play -and his drive to do weird and new things, such as design games you have to play in the sun (the Boktai franchise). Even outside of game design, Kojima's team at Konami demonstrates how pow erful the PS2 is, as they can push the system to generate some of its best visuals Kojima recently announced that there will be an MGS4 and that it will be for next-generation systems-he also added the amusing tag line "No place to hide, no place for Hideo!"

IS HE REALLY NOT DOING MGS4? Well, he will still be the executive producer, but he claims to be handing director duties to someone else. Then again, he said the same thing about MGS3, and look what happened there. He hasn't commented on any other projects yet.

NHD IS HE? He's president, CEO, and cofounder of Insomniac Games, devel oper of the Spyro the Dragon and Ratchet & Clank series. Insomniac is currently working on Ratchet: Dead locked, a "more sophisticated" interpre tation of the series

WHICH PUBLISHER OWNS INSOMNIAC?

That's the thing: none of them. Insom niae is one of a dwindling number of fully independent studios in this cut throat world of videogame design, and judging from Price's past comments, he fully intends to keep it that way. This allows the studio to make quirky, interesting games that haven't been focus grouped to death, a feat that's made even more impressive by the studio's top-notch technological chops

SO MART MALL HE DO NEXT? As the industry continues its current trend of buyouts, mergers, and consolidations, look for Price to emerge as a cheerleader for cre ativity, innovation, and the independent spirit. Until then, it's a safe bet that a game from Insomniac will make an early appearance on PS3

Harry Marketter

WHO IS HE? He's a producer at Capcom

WHY DOES HE MATTER? While Kelli Ina fune (creator of Mega Man and producer of the Onimusha franchise) is a well known Capcom producer, Kobayashi has quietly been making a name for himself, contributing to franchises such as Resi dent Evil and Devil May Cry. His current project is Killer 7, which, if nothing else, will end up being the weirdest game on the market. But the biggest reason he's on this list is because of his help in transforming Resident Evil 4 from yet another key hunt with zombies into one of the best games of 2005. The cajones he had in totally revamping a tired franchise is something that might be reflected in more games in the coming months. He's likely to be helping RE4 make the transition from GameCube to PS2, and he's worth watching simply because he's unafraid to be bold and daring in game design

WILL THERE BE MORE ZOMBIES? For him, yes, as he's confirmed to be working on Resident Evil 5 (which, yes, will be in the style of RE4).

المستحدث والمستحدث

WHO IS HE? He's the product manager for ico and Wanda and the Colossus.

ARE UDECOGNES ART? If you're asking that, you must not have ever seen Ico—because if you had, you would have difficulty saying no to that question. It wouldn't be uncommon to play the game and stand around in the same place for a few minutes just to take in the scenery, which would often evoke emotion—something games have been trying to do for years. Ueda is transferring the same kind of dynamic into the spiritual successor to Ico, called Wanda and the Colossus, which already looks spectacular

BUT ICO DIDN'T SEL THAT MANY COPPES. The fact that Wanda is even happening is a testament to the impact Ueda has had on the industry, Ico proved that a game doesn't need to make millions in sales to be successful; the bond between player and game is ultimately more important. Fans of Ico, who have been demanding another project from Ueda and his team for years, are finally getting what they asked for.













WHO IS HE? He's the president of Crite rion, the studio behind all things Burnout and Black and the ubiquitous RenderWare technology

OH THAT STUDO THAT DESTROYS THANS. Right—both the upcoming shooter Black and Burnout 4 are known for let ting you wreak havoc, whether it be with a gun or a ear. But though Criterion has a healthy appetite for destruction, the studio should actually be better known for creating things.

INHAT DO YOU MEAN? While middleware may not be sexy, RenderWare is extremely significant—25 percent of all videogames being made are based on Criterion's middleware programming. The company's newest extension is into the handfield space with RenderWare Mobile—games built on that technology will now make their way to the PSP, the Nintendo DS, even cell phones and PDAs. And as EA now owns Criterion (meaning any company who uses RenderWare has to pay a fee to EA), this is just another way it is cementing its position as the king of the hill.



WHO IS HE? He's the guy who directed Sony's recent hit God of War He was also recently named creative director of Sony's Santa Monica studios—in addi tion to God of War, they have devel oped the Twisted Metal series, War of the Monsters, and Downhill Domination.

SO WILL THERE BE A GOD OF WAR

SEQUEL? No official word yet, but given the game's critical reception and early sales, we'd be shocked if there wasn't Just don't look for Jaffe to helm the project any involvement on his part will be purely in a supervisory capacity.

LHAT'S HE DDING THEN? Jaffe's now overseeing all the projects coming out of the Santa Monica studio. Things have been strangely silent since God of War came out, but rumors have started leaking—all we can say right now is that it's a safe bet at least some of the upcoming projects involve next-gen stuff. Mr Jaffe, if you're reading this, the team at OPM would respectfully like to request that at least one of those secret games contains a knife-wielding octomorkey with laser eyes.







LARRY PROBST

WHO IS HE? Oh, he's only the ruler of the videogame universe, otherwise known as the CEO of Electronic Arts

I-HAT CAN YOU SAY? It'd be one thing if Electronic Arts was this massive company that relied too much on licenses and produced nothing but crap year flutry year, but that's not really what EA is about. Though sales of its games have been down in recent months, the company continues to lead by example by producing games that are still better than a vast majority of what appears on store shelves. Plus, its sports games smeply aren't matched in terms of popularity and, in the view of some, quality. In fact, EA's sports games are one of the major reasons people buy a broadband adapter for the PS2, and Sony should be thanking EA for that. But when it comes down to it, all of this is possible because Probst just makes smart business moves.

HOH DOES HE DO IT? The acquisition of development houses such as Criterion gives EA access to an unprecedented level of talent that most companies could only dream of having. The purchase of fkey licenses hasn't hurt either. EA doesn't hesitate when it comes to snagging movie licenses, and because of that, many of its games receive instant attention from consumers—how could any Lord of the Rings fan resist the chance to participate in the quest to bring the Ring to Mt. Doom? Who wouldn't want to rid Gotham City of vile criminals? Even with its original properties, EA manages to capitatize on popular culture, much like it did with the Need for Speed Underground series, which has been one of EA's best sellers, thanks to the interest in car tuner culture. Say what you will about EA, but there's no denying that it got where it is because of Probst's ability to read the market and make moves accordingly. «





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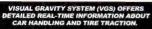


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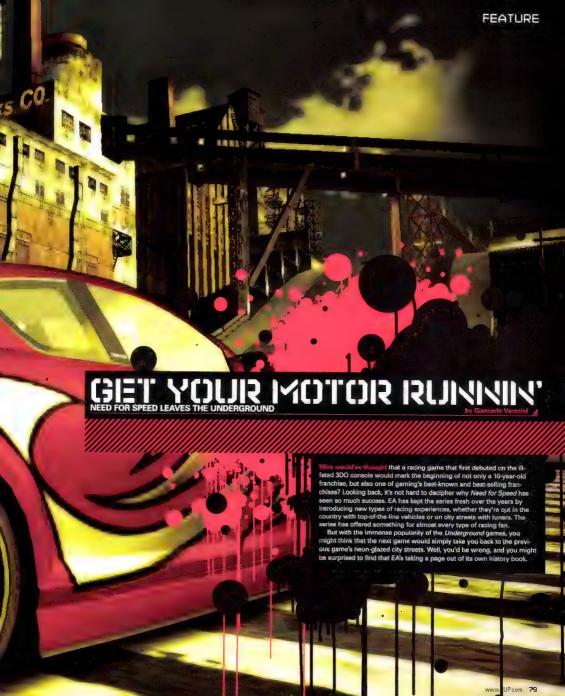
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PEDIGREE What do you think of when Metroid Prime and

SSX pop into your head? Probably not racing games, our the development team at EA Canada has a wealth of experi ence that gives them an idea of what makes a eally good game

in Vancouver, British Columbia, tower above the city's streets and overlook an enormous snowcapped mountain range, It's a direct contrast to the urban and generally gritty feel of the latest Need for Speed game, aptly dubbed Need for Speed: Most Wanted. But despite what may seem like an incompatibility in settings, it's actually a perfect place to continue the Need for Speed lineage. "The group here specializes in driving games," says Larry LaPierre, senior producer on Need for Speed: Most Wanted. "There are members from the original Need for Speed team here combined with some new blood. Also, we get to partner with some of the Burnout guys, so we get a fresh perspective on attacking the same problems."

Indeed, the amount of talent working on the game is impressive, especially since some members of the Most Wented development team have worked on not only the most popular EA franchises, but also well-known series from other companies. It's these experiences with a wide variety of games that help fuel the team's passion for coming up with new ideas. "My experience goes back to the SSX franchise with SSX Tricky and SSX 3," says LaPierre. "The first thing I wanted to do with [Most Wanted] was to get the cars up and twisting in the air. [Laughs] The more that you can apply to different genres and different games—we've found that it lets us create fresher experiences.

For Michael Mann, the game's producer, going from a relatively small studio like Retro (the studio responsible for Metroid Prime) to Electronic Arts didn't necessarily present that many problems. "The size of the team: is a little bit larger," he says. "The Retro team was a very dedicated and passionate group of individuals, but it's the same thing here. Really, thereis the same belief to make the best game possible here, and that's what attracted me to [EA Canada]—its passion for games and the designers."

But don't get the wrong idea. The Most Wanted development team also has a strong background in racing. "There's certainly a strong knowledge base on driving here," Mann adds. "We've had the same executive producer [Chuck Osieja] from the beginning of Need for Speed. Some of the other individuals have been working on Need for Speed for eight or nine years, so we definitely have the knowledge. A lot of people are also passionate about cars. They go to car shows during the weekend, and they're just entrenched in the industry. One guy has even won awards for tuning his car out.

Once the team was assembled, it was time to flesh out the ideas for a new Need for Speed. The process was fairly streamlined, with the team.

wenting to take the next logical step with the Need for Speed series, but they also wanted to avoid alienating pre-existing fans. The solution-take parts of one of the most popular Need for Speed games (Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2) and throw in elements that have made the recent games popular. "A couple of years ago, we wanted to evolve the franchise," says Mann. "So we looked at the good and bad of Hot Pursuit 2. We looked at the immersion of Underground 2, the open-world aspects, and how we could build and improve on that."

Of course, an easier way to create the next Need for Speed game would've been to just make another entry in the Underground series, but the development team is very cognizant of Need for Speed's roots and understands why the series has been around as long as it has. "If you were given a blank state and given the opportunity to put together parts; from the best experiences of what a Need for Speed game can deliverthat's what we're doing," says LaPierre. "We looked at everything that

"YOU HAVE TO FOCUS ON A NEW DIRECTION."

people like about the games, like street racing and customization. And we also looked at the consequences of introducing pursuit and evasion game mechanics. Still, we haven't had [too many] legacy issues to deal with because we just want to create the best game possible."

But even while relying on some of *Underground's* gameplay mechan-

ics, such as different street-racing types and customization, Most Wanted is facing an uphill battle. Many gamers' first Need for Speed experiences were with the Underground games, so the development team has to perform a bit of a balancing act.

"You're always faced with certain amounts of problems following any thing that's successful when you want to make it too much like it or not enough like it," says LaPierre "The most important thing-and we see this in so many game sequels—is that you have to focus on a new direction. If it's new and fresh but its foundational elements are familiar, then you've got something that people will be excited about. Regardless of their initial impressions, they'll get over it because word of mouth willovercome that."

RIDING IN STYLE

The first thing you'll notice about Need for Speed: Most Wanted is the distinct lack of wet, neon streets and a night sky. Obviously, the team wanted to go in a different direction in terms of Most Wanted's style, aiming for a grit tier urban look. "Whether it's a concrete structure, graffiti on a building, or garbage on the ground—there's a level of browning involved because sometimes environments can look a little too pretty or a little too country road," says Eduardo Agostini, Most Wanted's world art director. "We're definitely going for a sense that someone just walked through the environment and did something, so it's not just car traffic."

Since Most Wanted takes place underneath the rays of the sun, you can see much more detail in the environments, which presented the team with the potential problem of having to squeeze a little more power out of the PlayStation 2 hardware. "Actually, it makes stuff like lighting much easier than doing lighting at night," says Russell Rice, the game's technical art director. "Many other details, like proper

we wanted to get that feeling where a cop pulls up behind you—whether you've done anything or not—and you get the sweaty palms," Rice explains. "At that moment, we decided that the next time we have a game where there are pursuits involved, we have to try to figure out how to tap that emotion, whether it's through the joystick or if it's visual or auditory—whatever we can do. During the course of *Underground*, we developed a bunch of things that revolved around that, but it didn't involve pursuits. Now that we're back to pursuits, we've really been able to work on that aspect."

The design process for creating that kind of situation goes back to the level design. In order to help execute it, Most Wanted has been designed to be "claustrophobic" so that you feel the pressure of racing against other cars or away from the cops. But it all starts with a fer more basic idea. "We sit together and figure out what we want to build for our world," says Rice. "If they want a city, then we talk about what kind of city. The design aspect requires details





MOST WANTED HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO BE "CLAUSTROPHORIC."

shadowing—that's where the problems come (from). At the same time, it adds a completely different flavor and perspective." There's also an issue with attempting to replicate the incredible cinematic feel of the *Underground* games, something that might not be as easy to accomplish with a game like *Most Wanted*, but the team has a few tricks up its sleeve. "You will never see raw footage from a movie up on the screen," Rice adds. "So we generate raw footage, but it's the layers of effects that enable us Ito give it a certain look!."

Either way, they aren't going for a standard look. The team wants Most Wanted to have its own distinct style. "Saturated colors suggest an arcade racer," Agostini says. "We're not going over the top with color filters to give it a more cinematic feel." Nor does the team want to make it soek like Gran Turismo don't want to make it look like Gran Turismo, we're going for more of a movie look," Rice responds. "Something like Gran Turismo looks like how you would see it with your eye, whereas in a movie, you're going to see stuff layered over the top that brings out the art."

Beyond just the general look of the game, the art term for Most Wanted wants you to have a reaction to what you see in the game. They want you to feel the pressure of escaping the police as you zoom through different zones at top speed. "In Hot Pursuit, we first realized that like an East Coast or West Coast city, then we sit down and figure out what that is." Plus, there was plenty of research involved just to make sure that the game accurately portrayed various types of landscapes. "On this project, we wanted to differentiate ourselves from *Under ground* because it's a West Coast-flavor game," says Agostini. "The original idea was to go East Coast and do New England meets New York. We gathered as much reference imagery as possible, looked at movies, and just started gathering the best of the best. We then put it in there for the artists to look [all and to see what areas they were interested in so they could go out and collect even more reference material."

Interestingly, another crucial aspect of Most Wanted is its interactive world. While Underground features detailed environments, they are mostly just static streets with very little interaction between the cars and the objects in the environment. In Most Wanted, there will be far more, not only with simple objects strewn about the environment, but with the environment itself. "We have people coming up with epic nursuits and over the top moments, so we have people constantly brainstorming," says Agos tini. "We want to have things that you're smashing through or jumping over, so we plot them throughout the world and pace them accord ingly so people can hit these things every so often and feel like they're being notorious."



TWO ROADS

Eduardo Agostini has previous experience on the Naed for Speed series but briefly left to work on the racing sequences in 007. Every thing or Nothing. Rice's background includes a strik at BioWare during its early days; he worked on the company's highly recarded RPG.



ISIEV YOUR ENGINE

As you might expect, the sound designer for a film like The Fast and the Furious knows what he's doing when it comes to recording car audio for a game. Charles Deenen's experience in the film industry has brought a fresh perspective to the world of gaming for quite some time, most notably with the Need for Speed Underground series, and now he's bringing his expertise to Most Wanted as senior audio director. However, the transition from movies to games isn't all that easy. "It's very different," says Deenen. "In film, you always have the stuff prefilmed and you know exactly what will happen, but in games, you never know what the user will do. It's a lot harder to anticipate every movementin 10 years, you might see games that can preanticipate what the user is going to do.'

Then there are the technical limitations, Of course, with movies, you don't have to worry about how much sound you can load into RAM, but the PS2 is an entirely different story. "On the PS2, you have to cram everything into a space that amounts to one-and-a-half minutes of sound. What we usually do is see what a game looks like, see how it moves, and see how it drives. Then we'll record a piece to video and post it as if it were a film. Then we see what works and what didn't work. Then we examine what we can do to make it better, and once we know what we want to do, we go out and record or mix source from scratch."

Other similarities between creating sound for films and games include the actual process Much as they would do on a film, Deenen's team goes straight to the source to get the best possible sounds for the cars in the game. "We go to the streets," says Deenen, "where we mount microphones in the back and front in the engine compartment. Then we make something called a steady sound where we try to make loops (of sound] that will fit into memory." But, as Deenen points out, it's not always as simple as just sticking a mic inside the car. "Some of the mistakes we used to make involved recording a car in a vacuum," he says, "It makes it sound much bigger and better if you're recording in a space where there are walls and other things So, to record in a controlled environment is key

And it's these sounds that will help drive the thrill of being pursued by the cops. George Lucas once said that movies are 50 percent visual and 50 percent audio, meaning that sound is as important as anything you see onscreen. With that in mind, Deenen plans to highlight various sounds to help get your blood rushing when the sirens and flashing lights are on your tail. Deenen explains: "If we want to draw attention to a cop, then we focus on those sounds instead of just trying to play them all at once. [There's a temptation] to play every single sound you have at once, and a problem with games is that there's no focus on a certain sound."

The experience of working on the Under ground games has streamlined the process as well. "We started it in Underground 2, where we tried to focus on each sound at once instead of trying to play music, add wind, or other cars," says Deenen. "We just tried to focus on what was needed for the moment"



"A PROBLEM WITH GAMES IS THAT THERE'S NO FOCUS ON A CERTAIN SOUND."





















THERE'S A HUGE FOCUS ON TRADITIONAL STREET RACING, TOO.







ONLINE
You bet You can explore
Most Wanted to have
online features similar to
those found in Underground 2, but EA doesn't
want to release all the
details quite yet.



IBUIRIN ISUJIBIBIEIR

Pursuits aren't anything new to the Need for Speed series. Two previous games, Hot Pursuit and Hot Pursuit 2, both focused on the thrill of running from the cops in a high-performance vehicle, but Most Wanted takes the idea in a somewhat different direction. The whole idea is to build up as much street cred as possible, which involves racing against a variety of opponents in races similar to those found in the Underground games. Of course, in the process of doing this, you attract the unwanted attention of the local police force, which would like nothing better than to take you down

And they'll try everything. One of the most important features in Most Wanted is the Al for the police. In older pursuit games, the police would normally just bump you in order to take you off the road, but in Most Wanted, they use just about every single tactic in the book, including a technique known as boxing in. Up to three police cars will attempt to trap you inside of a box in the hope that it will either slow you down or put you out of commission completely. While we didn't actually get to see any tactics other than this one, the development team assures us that there will be a reason you start to sweat a little when you hear those sirens coming up behind you. Additionally, as you progress through the game, you build up your heat meter, which is essentially an indication of how badly the cops would like to get their hands on you. There are a number of methods for lower ing your heat meter, like heavily customizing your car to the point that it wouldn't be recog nized by the fuzz.

But it's not all about the police. As previously mentioned, there's a huge focus on traditional street racing, too. The street-racing events are still in the design process at the moment, but if you liked the type of racing found in the Underground games, then chances are, you'll have no problem picking up Most Wanted and getting right into a race. Plus, if you're a fan of the customization options in Underground, you'll be pleased to know that Most Wanted will offer similar choices, but this time they will have a larger gameplay role.

Unfortunately, it's too early to really tell how the latest Need for Speed is going to turn out. Sure, the idea of mixing the Hot Pursuit and Underground racing formulas is an intriguing one. Also, EA has already started addressing concerns fans had with Underground, 2 namely the single large, open world, which has been somewhat tossed out the window for Most Wanted in favor of a world that's more sectional. In any case, fans of the series have something to be excited about as game features solidify and additional information is released in the months leading up to Most Wanted's November release.





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OUT PURE PATTING KEY Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blergs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know their any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in

your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.57 Well...at least

they're fun to rip apart.

NSDE

- Cold Winter 95 Dragon Ball Z: Sagas
- 94 Enthusia
- 93 Full Spectrum Warrior
- 95 Graffiti Kingdom 92 Haunting Ground 86 Midnight Club 3:
- **DUB** Edition 92 NARC
- 95 Obscure
- 95 Stella Deus

- 1D1 Ape Escape: On the Loose: Darkstalkers Chronicle:
- The Chaos Tower Gretzky NHL

- 98 NBA 99 NFL Street 2: Unleashed
- IBI Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory
- ICI Smart Bomb
- 100 Spider-Man 2
- 99 Tiger Woods PGA Tour
- Tony Hawk's
- Underground 2: Remix
- World Tour Soccer





MIDNIGHT CLUB 3:

A TUNER FAN'S DREAM

There's an obvious glut of street-racing games on store shelves, and while Midnight Club 3 might initially seem like a shallow attempt to capitalize on the increasing popularity of the tuner market, it actually isn't. In fact, Midnight Club 3 does a decent job of straddling the line between over—the-top arcade street racing and simulation.

Midnight Club 3 gives you high-speed races through the streets of three different cities that involve lots of collisions, huge jumps, and insers shortcuts as well as traditional skill-based races. The game's vehicle selection is similarly well balanced. Each type of car has physicathet are grounded in real life. SUVs are slower, hulking beasts that can take a serious beating, while sports cars are faster but can't absorb quitte as much damage. At the same time, everything is balanced enough so that no single car will have a huge advantage during a race, unless you! haven't been taking the time to upgrade your ride.

And it's the upgrading that really takes the spotlight. The garage feature in Midnight Club 3 offers so many different oustomization and tuning options that it could've easily been its own car customization game. While you won't spend a ton of time in there initially (for the simple reason that you just won't have the fundel, you will once you have semed more money and unlocked additional items to customize your ride. Indeed, you might even find yourself spending dozens of minutes just looking for the right paint job or spoiler for your car—and that's not even taking into consideration choosing performance upgrades, which also occupies a good portion of your time. There's just a very addictive element to this, and the game does a great job of making sure that your customization efforts don't go unnoticed.

This is especially true for the online portion of the game. Racing online against other people gives you an opportunity to not only show off your car, but also check out the modifications other players have made to their vehicles. It's not unlike playing an MMORPC and finding some armor that you can't wait to show off to other people in the game. More importantly, the online modes are well executed. Straight-up racing is still a little more fun than any of the other options offerad because it gives you a chance to really test your car's performance, but the other modes, such as capture the flag, offer a nice diversion to standard racing—even if you get your fill of them rather quickly. Then there are the power-ups. Much like in Maria











There's a strong emphasis on speed in Midnight Club 3. You have not only nitro, but also slipstream turbo, with which you draft behind an opponent's car until you fill up the turbo meter—then. you can blow right by him, but you have to be really careful. Moving at high speeds is not always the best option, particularly if you're in a part of the city that requires you to make a few sharp turns.

DUB EDITION

Kert, these power-ups can completely change the outcome of a race, but some people may want to avoid using them altegether since they tend to make the game a little too surreal at times.

The single-player mode offers good fun se well, but navigation can still be an issue. During a roce, your statention is focused on several different things at once, and it can often be difficult to gauge exactly where you're supposed to go or what the best route is. So, unless you have some kind insane shilly to see through videogene wells, chances are you're going to have to retry individual races multiple times, whether you like it or not. Yes, as you get to know the layout of a city, this becomes less of a problem, but until you reach that point, it's a major source of frustration.

Overall, Midnight Club 3 has something to offer every kind of racing fan. Sometimes it can feel a little too over the top, particularly when power-upe and special abilities for specific cars are unlocked, such as the roar shockwave for muscle cars that pushes everyone out of the way. Yet somehow, it always manages to pull you back down to reality, whether it's inside the garage or when you're neck and neck in a race to the last checkpoint. & Giancarlo Varanini)

PROS Fun races, excellent customization mode

CONS Feels a little too over the top sometimes, trial and error racing is frustrating

Pals. Reckster Beir, Rockster Sen Diege \$5000 Effe: 10000 \$40.00





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NEVIEWS



Haunting Ground is a bit of a head scratcher, and it's not because its puzzles are incredibly difficult to solve. For a game like this to come from the company that pioneered the survival-horror genre doesn't make sense, because Haunting Ground is essentially a lete '90s style survival-horror game. Most of the mechanics in the game hearken back to an era when the survival-horror formula was still in its infancy.

This becomes most apparent in the way you search for items. Sometimes you'll get the trademark shiny Item, which is easy to spot in the game's environments, but often, it just takes a lot of searching of random objects. The game's puzzles are incredibly straightforward, but since Haunting Ground has an open-ended feel, there's a tendency to completely lose track of which item belongs to which puzzle or where you're supposed to go once you've solved one. Haunting Ground does try a few new things,

but they're not all that noteworthy. Your canine companion, who often helps you solve puzzles, is somewhat of a chore to keep track of. The panic feature, whereby the game's main character starts to frantically run around if frightened by the creatures pursuing her, is simply an extension of what Capcom introduced in Resident Evil 3 with Nemesis, and nothing about it dramatically adds to the gameplay.

There's some inherent charm in playing a game like Haunting Ground, but really, it's just not a particularly interesting game in most respects. & Giancarlo Varanini

PROS Nice environments, controls are decent CONS Old-style survival-horror, new ideas fall flat

Pub. Capcom Dev. Capcom ESRB M MSRP \$39.99

00000

Cold Winter's script is by Warren Elius, and if you're at all intriqued by his work, he as also writering a bunch of another you have been a submitted another presents. We recommend Tenameropoolitan is journalist takes on the presidents, Med (ex-CIA taller versus the CIA fissell), Planetary (unesting agino in a lauperharo, mythology), or Global-Fraquency (increal) perfectly of the threats in fact, one of the threats in fact, one of the threats in fact, one of the threats in Cold Winter.

Whether it's biting social

behavior of U.S. and Chi-

nese civilians or just a

stupid game mechanic,

NARC shows that while

U.S. citizens are easy to

person will pull off slick martial arts moves.

arrest, every Chinese

commentary on the





COLD WINTER

Amyone who's read about intelligence work should realize that the James Bond mystique is completely glamorized, and that intelligence work is either quite boring or quite gritty. Cold Winter chooses to portray the rough and dirty side of espionage—a portrayal that fevors improvised weapons over fantastical gadgets, and greedy arms dealers with chemical weapons over mustache-twiriers with doornsday devices.

Cold Winter turns out to be a very solid, if slightly unremarkable, first-person shooter. It provides lots of shooting action along with a handful of interesting features and additions. You get to use lots of different guns: (and explosives created by everyday objects in a variety of decent-looking levels. The ability to pick up objects to use as shields or weapons, or knock them over to use as points of cover, is novel at first but becomes unnecessary later on. The underlying physics makes the falling and flailing of



bodies more interesting and the explosions more dynamic. The multiplayer game isn't a stunning array of new modes, but a very solid implementation of traditional online shooter modes. The action is constant and solid, but never amazing nor horrid.

Cold Winter's plot is actually the interesting aspect. While you play as ex-MI6 agent Andrew Sterling in his quest to stop some arms dealer from selling the ominously named Octopus to evil terror dudes around the globe, the most fascinating plot parts are the cut-scenes that explain the history of the "Grey Wings." At first you might wonder why the heck you're learning about an old WWII veteran and his flying buddies, but as this parallel story progresses, it becomes more relevant to the Octopus story until both link together in the end. However, even with its fascinating narrative, Cold Winter doesn't quite elevate itself much higher than "very good shooter." Don't buy this expecting a redefinition of shooting; buy it knowing that you'll be getting a solid chunk of action high jinks, but nothing more and nothing less. **≪** Thierry Nguyen

VERDICT A good spy shooter with a pretty good story. Just not excellent.

Pub. Vivendi Universal Dev. Swordfish ESRB M MSRP \$49.99



Booting up Midway Arcade Treasures 2 gives one a new appreciation for the original NARC. There's nostalgic and goofy fun to be had in playing as heavily armed cops shooting and arresting persp, which culminates in a fight against a giant drug kingpin's head sporting mechanical legs. It's consequently amazing to see just how bad this new version of NARC is.

The only highlight of this miserable budget game is the odd combination of arrests and demotion. Do too many "bad cop" things (hitting civilians, taking drugs) and you eventually get demoted to beat cop and then civilian. However, the way you get back to becoming a detective and playing missions is to arrest people to boost your cop rating. This means that you, a disheveled citizen with rags and crusty facial hair, still have the power to arrest people.

The rest is just the poorest of filler. Crap aiming and a crap camera combine with boring,

nonsensical missions to translate into horrid gameplay for the main story. Taking drugs is a clichéd effect—that is, you emit a mild chuckle the first time you do it but never again. The soundtrack, featuring the likes of Cypress Hill and Grandmaster Flash, grows weary and repetitive as you hear Curtis Mayfield's "Pusherman" for the 57th time. The framerate drops to the single digits when more than 20 of the same character are on your screen.

NARC just might be the ultimate antidrug message, as it basically shows us that drugs aren't cool, just stupid. **«** Thierry Nguyen

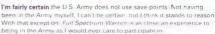
VERDICT A lead contender for the worst game of 2005. Just say no.

Pull. Midway Dev. Point of View ESRB M MSRP \$19.99

LL SPECTRUM WARRIOR



The Xbox version of Full Snactrum Warrior includes a hidden set of missions designed exclu sively for the Army, in which the game is much hence orders of magnitude more challenging Unfortunately, the PS2 version does not include this mode, but entering Cheats section and crerûng a new profile dûes open up an increased difficulty setting called Authentic.



This may look like a shooter from the screenshots but in truth it's a real time strategy game. That means you' get through it on the strength of tactics and patience, making a move without cover or a clear exit strategy will get your ass hanged to you. You will guickly learn to move only from cover to cover stand in the open and you re dead in seconds.

The deliberate pacing and the focus on strategy over reflexes is certainly ainceichange in the war game arena, and the graphilis, voiceover and presentation are all far above average its a bit unfortinate though that after a few missions the game starts to feel monotonous. Missions usually run as follows Leapfrog your two squads through the level untiyou see an enemy. Have one squad occupy him with suppressing fire. Have the other squad flank him for a clear shot and take him out. Repeat Now there's definitely a certain element of tension that should keep you interested, but not as much as you'd expect in a standard RTS. And increased difficulty is more a result of a greater number of enemies and a poorer choice of cover than any real factical challenge

All the same - onsidering the PS2's worful lack of solid strategy titles. FSW easily eaps to near the top of the heap respecially given its solid online co op mode. It sia bargain at 20 bucks & Joe Rybicki

ROS Innovative concept and execution, nice graphical effects, great

Tends toward the monotonous after a while and relies a bit more on common sense than canny tactics

Peb. THO Day. Pandemic/Mass Media ESRS M MSRP \$19.99













_ REVIEWS

E**NTHUSIA** PROFESSIONAL RACI<u>NG</u>

CURRENT LAP

O 57/2 16





ENTHUSIA







There is a tendency in Enthusia for high-powiered cars to spin out after you simply let off the gas...or to undersitive vicumity other you brake before a turn. Did someone forget that slowing down transfers that weight to the front all the car, making you less tikely to spin out as long as you started braking before the turn?

After playing Enthusia for 15 hours, I fired up Gran Turismo 4 for a side-byside comparison. "Surely," I thought, "I am misremembering the difficulty of the Gran Turismo games. Surely, driving well in Enthusia can't be that much more irritating than driving well in GT." Turns out I wasn't, and it is.

If you've ever driven a car, you can turn on GT4 and expect to do reasonably well Oh, you may not win every race, but you can generally expect to spend at least the majority of your time on the track.

Boot up Enthusia, on the other hand, and you're likely to end up doing unintentional donuts as the pack blows by you. This is not an easy game to get into. Which is not to say it's a wholly unrewarding game...as long as you're willing to put in the time and effort.

The biggest innovation—and the biggest frustration—is the use of "Enthu points" for the career mode. Think of Enthu points like hit points: If you lose them all over the course of a race (by striking other cars, hitting walls, or going off course), then you're "dead"—you have to sit out the next week of racing. This is innovative because it forces you to drive carefully; it's these points that contribute to your car's tuning level, and if you routinely iose too many in the course of racing, your car will be stuck as a level 1 crapmobile.

Only trouble is, you also lose Enthu points when other cars hit you. So you earn pretty quickly that you need to lose most of your early races. See, if you drive slowly enough, you can maintain an almost perfect line, and if you stay behind your competitors, you don't run the risk of getting

hit by another driver. So your best approach is to keep losing races until you max out your car, and only then should you try to make any effort to win. If you ask me, that's just silly

Furthermore, because of the limited tuning options, you're going to spend a lot of time switching cars, there's none of the G7-style process of picking a relatively mediocre car and tricking the hell out of it. If you start off with a crappy car in Enthusia, it's pretty much going to stay fairly crappy no matter what you do to it...so you get to experience the joy of wasting tuning points on many, many occasions

Bottom line: Enthusia is one of the least user-friendly gaming experiences I've had in a long time. But that's not to say it's entirely without ment; it serves as a nice training tool for careful criving and a great purchase for anyone who thinks Gran Turismo 4 is too easy. For the other 99.9 percent of you, though, there's nothing Enthusia does that GT4 doesn't do orders of maonitude better. « Joe Rybrich

PASSES Ideal for obsessive-compulsive racers and fans of statistics CRASHES Enthu system is fundamentally whacked; plue, GT4 dose just about everything much, much better

Pub. Konemi Dev. Konemi ESNS E MSRP \$39.99





Strategy games have been enjoying a renais sance on the PS2 Stella Deus is a conventional but complex game that will reveal its best features only to gamers already acquainted with the genre's inner workings. As ever, you lead a cadre of warriors on a politically and morally motivated quest, cleaving foes in a polite, turn-based form of battle. Why does anyone accept this adrenaline free abstraction of war? Because the intricacies of the gameplay make it rewarding

For a game comprised entirely of dozens of menus. Stella Deus is surprisingly streamlined Yes, you have to muck about with tons of statis tics, but the developers have organized and explained it all perfectly. The ability system is very well balanced, offering up several different types of skills to tweak. There's also a team attack system, which offers up heightened strategic possibilities. Everything jells together nicely, resulting in a game that is neither pur

ishing in its difficulty nor a total cakewalk

The visual design packs interesting detail, but the cutout characters and amateur-hour voice acting don't add much punch to the story. It's a more cerebral than visceral tale, though: A pack of morally conflicted teenagers take on a military madman over the fate of the world.

Stella Deus presents an engrossing experience for the hardened campaigner. It's chock-full of quests, items, battles, and moral ambiguity. offering a fine-tuned gameplay experience that anyone who's been longing for the next Final Fantasy Tactics should enjoy. & Christian Nutt

VERDICT It may not cut a new figure in the strategy genre, but it's exceptionally refined. Pub. Adus Dev. Pinegrow ESRET MSRP \$49.99 RATING



DRAGON BALL Z: SAGAS FOUR HOURS GONE FOREVER

Dragon Ball Z: Sagas is proof positive that the ESRB needs to adopt a new rating called CO for "contractual obligation." How else can gamers be protected against obvious rush jobs that are cashing in on, in this case, a fading license? Spare me the sales charts showing how hot Dragon Ball Z still is (and perhaps proving that some games are simply immune to reviews). Sagas is a terrific idea-a story-based adventure instead of a second-rate fighting game—that was turned into a very short game (about four hours in single-player mode) with uninspired art and level design. Ah, but DBZ fans are bound to be sated-a few parts are actually fun, and there is a competent two-player co-op mode. And in the end, that's about all that's important. & Tom Byron

Pub. Atari Dev. Avalanche ESRB T MSRP \$49.99

RATING





There are three stages of development in drawing Graffiti Kingdom characters

1. Crap Like a preschooler with finger paint, you let the 3D pen go where it wants to, squiggling it across the screen just to see what happens. Your characters look like melted crayons. But once you've grasped the basics of crude shape mak ing, your mind guickly turns toward

2. Obscenity While refining your phallus draft ing skills, you discover the nuances of assigning functions to your created parts. Calling a part an "arm" makes it swing, bend, and punch like the real thing. But like Will Ferrell movies, game characters with manly endowments are only funny the first time you see them, so you soon get down to the real business of.

3. Creativity Given a blank canvas on which to create any kind of character you want, you soon realize how many characters haven't been done. My first real attempt was a giant Marshall guitar amplifier (think Spinal Tap) with flaming quitar necks for arms. I also spent a couple of hours recreating Chris Ware's comic-book antihero Jimmy Corrigan (a slouching, balding wuss), but true to form, he couldn't fight worth a damn

Graffiti Kingdom is a really simple actionadventure, and by adventure, I mean there's a remote possibility you could get lost for a few minutes: Prince Pixel, our young hero, transforms into your homemade creations to battle a menagerie of weirdos. But for me, the simple combat takes a backseat to turning everything I love into a videogame character. & Robert Ashley,

ROS Watching your character come to life CONS Shallow combat can get repetitive

Pub. Hot-B Dev. Taito/Garakuta-Studio ESRB E MSRP \$29.99 RATING



Stella Deus is the second ame from the team

behind the PSI tactical blunder Hashigami, Forti.

nately, this game is much

more balanced and fun.

Hoshigami mean the

same thing, "star of God,

in Latin and Japanese,

Stella Deus and

expectively

DOOM

Obscure's students beat out Doom's merines in one aspect—they've actually figured out how to attack flashlights to their wwaponry.



Obscure is a cut-rate survival-horror game set in a high school. Maneuvering and combat are both very clumsy, and the whole game leaves you wondering about the choices the game designers made. Why can I pick some locks but not others? Why can I break some windows but not others? Why do I have to flip to a separate Status screen to see my health meter? The group of students you control is no brain trust-even Scooby-Doo and the gang could have figured out what nefarious plot was afoot after exploring the first building. But not only can these kids not figure it out on their own, they actually stick around a campus filled with murderous creatures when nothing is keeping them there. Be smarter than they are and stay away. **«** Dana Jongewaard

Pub. DreamCatcher Dov. Hydravision ESRB M MSRP \$19.99 RATING

























The original Wipsout rocked the early days of the PS1. Its sleek, stylish look and fiendishly crafted courses made it clear that a new era of garning had arrived. You're going to hear a lot about how Wipeout Pure is doing the same thing for the PSP...but you're not going to hear it from me.

Don't get me wrong, Pure is a very good game. It's simply gorgeous, for one thing—its style is similar enough to the original game's to be familiar, yet it's streamlined and updated enough to feel contemporary. The tracks are gleaming visions of a methamphetamine-fueled future, with eye-popping light and weather effects, more eye candy than is positive ble to take in at the ridiculous speeds the game runs at.

Ah yes, the speed; this is the watershed achievement Pure can rightly lay claim to. This game proves beyond the slightest doubt that the PSP can do racing games at home-console speeds and do them very, very well. Don't be fooled by the first league of races—by the time you hit Rapier class, you'll be in more danger from the walls of the track than from other racers. And so in terms of graphics and speed, it's a fantastic showcase for the system.

But damn is it shallow. For one thing, a mere 12 tracks (four of which need to be unlocked via a pretty serious time investment) are on hand for racing, with another four for the "zone" (read: endurance) mode. Advanced levels of difficulty are pretty much solely created by speeding

up your vehicle; your opponents will get a little cannier with weapon use but not much. So you'll play through the eight tracks in three tournaments: the first four, the next four, and then all eight. And once you do that, you do it again, only faster. And then again, faster. And, well, that's pretty much it. You do need to play through single races and time trials to open up the four locked "classic" tracks, but this feels more like an artificial method of increasing play time than an added-value feature.

While I found myself fiercely addicted for the first day or so, once I'd opened up a couple classic tracks and witnessed the ridiculous level of difficulty offered by Rapier class, I felt as though I'd had my fill

To be fair, the elegantly simple ad hoc multiplayer features add some replay value. And the promise of new tracks, vehicles, and skins available for download in the coming months means that there will be reasons to keep picking up Pure in the future. I just don't expect it to be too long before I put it back down again. « Joe Rybicki

VERDICT Pure is like a highly paid namely model: hearthreakingly gorgeous and dangerously thin.

Pels. Sony CEA Dev. Sony Studio Liverpool ESRB E MSRP \$49.99

RATING



HACKALICIDUS

While no Wipeout Pure downloads were available as of press time, some enterprising PSP fan bid come up with an unusual use for Pure's download interface: Web browsing. Turn to page 110 for details.



COMPETITION





TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX HOW DID THEY SQUEEZE ALL THAT GAME INTO SUCH A SMALL SPACE?

Say what you will about the Jackess-like antics of THUG2 (which I did in my review of the PS2 version); there is something damned impressive about playing such a huge game on such a tiny system. Remix is, except in the most negligible examples, virtually identical to its PS2 big brother it's astonishingly easy to forget you're playing the game on a handheld. If you're familiar with the Tony Hawk controls, you will pick up Remix and instantly know what you're doing. And with the exception of the four new levels, you will have the exact same experience the PS2 version provides.

This means you'll be able to roam around these huge, dynamic levels on your board or on foot. You'll hunt for hidden characters, you'll throw tomatoes at pedestrians, you'll wipe out more than you care to admit, and (if you're anything like me) you'll get tired of the juvenile antice of Bern Margers. But seriously, nearly everything from the PS2 version is here, including the fully fleshed-out classic mode for those of us who just want to skate, man, without all those story mode distractions. You can even slap your own face on your skater via the relatively simple means of transferring a photo to your PSP's memory stick. The only noticeable absence is the create-a-park feature—which, honestly, is no big loss.

I will say that the controls aren't quite perfect: I missed being able to stop while on foot and look around with the right analog stick, for example. I also found myself wishing for the ability to zoom the default camera way out; I don't know if it's the size of the screen or the level design, but I wanted to see more of my skater's surroundings. And while we're talking about the screen, a note to future PSP developers: A day/night cycle is not a good idea for a handheld game. Playing in real-life daylight while the game's showing a nighttime scene is a recipe for a lifetime of migraines.

All that aside, Remix is a damn fine port of a very solid game—it's better than anyone had any right to expect on a handheld and a pretty impressive showcase of what the PSP is capable of. « Joe Rybicki

900 It's virtually identical to the PS2 version-for better or worse FACE PLANT The camera's zoomed in too much, and camera control suffers

Pub. Activision Dev. Shaba Games/Neversoft ESRE T MSRP \$49.99

RATING







TWISTED METAL: HEAD-ON TEN-YEAR-OLD GAME OF THE FUTURE

Like every red-blooded American man-boy, I can feel the hairs on my arms bristle at the sights and sounds of destruction. So while I tried my best to resist yet another Twisted Metal game, the pyrotechnic demolition of Head-On wormed its way through my defenses.

I turned up my nose at the very idea of car combat. "A dead, silly genre!" But smashing my way through the crumbling ruins of L.A. highways and Egyptian tombs cured my jaded attitude. Head-On's levels are littered with breakable set pieces, pillars, air ducts, wells, and innocent vehicles. It's a china shop, and you're the bull.

I scoffed at the archaic control scheme, the Mortal Kombat-style D-ped combinations used for special moves, and the 10-year-old button layout. 'Still no decent analog control!" But as I made my way through the paces the well-worn interface attached itself to the nerves in my hands. I sank into the game like I'd sink into an old bean bag chair-not sexy, but functional.

Quickly losing ground, I grasped for flaws, for lapses in taste. "Lame characters! Adolescent comic-book rejects!" But who was I kidding? Over the years I'd come to love the little scamps, Axel in his tractor-tiremounted torture rack, Sweet Tooth's creepy homicidal smile.

So I gave in and had a blast. The levels, especially the larger, later ones, are some of the best the series has seen. Tearing around Monaco's racetrack, dodging (or blowing up) Indy cars pushes my buttons. The new Paris cleverly mixes big, open ground-floor spaces with rooftops and ramps, creating lots of big-air "Duke boys" action

Head-On's real hook is the wireless online play. I've spent many mornings at a café down the street, drinking soap-foam cappuccinos and gnawing on gummy bagels, just to catch a Wi-Fi signal. Why? 1) Reel players make the game 10 times more fun. 2) Deathmatching across the continent on your PSP makes you feel like you're from the future. 3) People look at you funny when you blurt, "Oh, hell yeah!" & Robert Ashley

VERDICT A comfy standby that refuses to go quietly out of feehion. Still great fun, especially online.

Puls. Sony CEA Dev. Incog Inc. ESR&T MSRP \$39.99







WORLD TOUR SOCCER SHORT ON DEPTH, LONG ON FUN

World Tour Soccer has its shortcomings, but in the long run it ends up trumping its big PS2 brother. Maybe it's the competition—there's no Winning Eleven for the PSP, and FIFA is strong but not epic—but for a kick around, you could do a lot worse.

The game moves very quickly, but it's way too easy to back defenders into their own goal if you play on the easier difficulty levels—they won't even try to tackle you. Pump it up to the Master Class level (the most difficult of the four settings), though, and you can forget about easily batting the ball around, as the defense will blanket you like Greece did to its competition in the Euro 2004 tournament. Strangely, though, regardless of your difficulty level, the AI will pass up excellent one-on-goalie opportunities to kick the ball back to a trailing, covared teammate. There's just not a lot of AI urgency to go for the goal, regardless if the team is up 3 to

nothing or down by a single score.

While the challenge mode is revearding you'll earn points for successful passes, goals, clean sheets, etc., plus you'll unlock loads of footy goodness—it's also quite short. And there are still far too few game modes—the international cups are here, but there are no leagues to speek of. Plus, the game makes the age-old mistake of putting the shoot and slide-tackle commands on the same button—meaning ovul'll to kick the ball on net and end up slide tackling a tackler from behind for a yellow card. So frustrating, 4° Todd Zuniga

PROS Fun and fast, nice replays, tone of teams.

CONS Long load times, you have to go to ad hoc mode for wireless play, stupid Dive button.

Puls. Sony CEA Dev. Sony Studio Liverpool ESNB E MSRP \$39.95





NBA WE'RE TALKING BOUT PRACTICE

An impressive hoops debut, NBA is a Baby Bulls-type surprise. While its name is more Atari 2600 than PSP 2005, it delivers all the prohoops fixings in style. The game's smart presentation is followed by eye-catching arenas that show off the system's visual prowess, and the brilliant, responsive crowd puts you right there on the parquet.

The game's run-and-gun style is more reminisant of Bo Kimble's 1990 Loyola Marymount team than the sluggish pro game, but the scores are kept down by a troublesome shot meter that aims to be innovative but shoots an air ball. For anyone who's been one-touch shooting since Ben Franklin discovered electricity, the steep learning curve is skiller. You preshe button once to start the shot and again to release it. Two presses: too stupid. With enough practice—using the Skills Challenge, Three-point Contest, and Paint minigames—

you'll eventually drain buckets. But I find it maddening that I'm still blowing open layups, because of the two-touch system.

Also, if you've got a player in your face and you try to shoot, it will be blocked. If, by miracle, you launch a shot over your smothering defender, it will miss 78 out of 79 times. And many will be air balls. Even the Allen Iversons of the world won't find investigation.

Although it's filled with flaws, this is a still a very playable on-the-go b-ball game, even with the occasional bugs and an unthinkably bad free-throw system.

« Todd Zuniga

PROS Better than the PS2 version, greatminigames, slick presentation CONS Shooting system will give you fits, nocommentary, too meny blocks, outdated Pub. Sony CEA Day 988 Sports ESIBS E MISRY 539.99

PATING



NO GOALS

To NHL continues to be to a labor stands to entry meetings have enougher. Latest evelopments have the cutful othering two proposes and the players oftening no counterproposal specific replacement asserts if this doesn't

SKILLS TO PAY THE

The PlayStation Skills

Challenge is one cool

minigame. Testing your dribbling, passing, and

to spend a commute.

shooting, it's a great way:

2118



GRETZKY NHL

While it always puzzled me that Sony's first-party sports games struggle on the company's own system, 989 Sports has hit its stride on the PSP. At worst, all of its portable titles are better than their PS2

its stride on the PSF. At worst, all of its portable titles are better than their PS2 counterparts; at best, all of them are fun. No small-screen 989 game exemplifies the fun factor like *Gretzky NHL*. The various PS2 gameplay bumps have been Zam-



boni'd out of this one, and what's left is a Gaborik-fast hockey game that will even put a smile on the faces of grumpy, lock out-pissed Canadians.

In the spirit of the Sega Genesis hockey revolution, the team opted to keep the game simple instead of overanimating the skaters and bogging down the action. The game-play can sometimes feel jerky since it's paced to keep those with attention deficit disorder focused, but hockey fans won't mind in the least. The game skews to the international style instead of the NHL left-

NYL of VAN CLUB A STOLEN Beginning at Purge



wing lock, and you can expect lots of breakaways, big saves, and one-timer goals.

The Al isn't brilliant, and the defense will stay put in front of its own net if it can get back in time. Plus, the replays show that many shots never actually touch the stick but are just flung out of the stick's general vicinity. But I don't care—there's enough realism to allow the suspension of a little disbelief. And as rewarding as it is to tickle twine, and as cool as this game is, you won't care, either. "

PROS Simplified shot aiming is tops, players hockey-stop instead of just stopping CONS Where's the three-minute period length? No commentary, sometimes you'll skate circles

around the puck VERDICT A great fill-in during the lockout

Poli Sony CEA Date Page 44/982 Sports ESRB F MSRP \$39.99

DATING









NFL STREET 2: UNLEASHED

It's funny how NFL Street 2 is somewhat better suited for the PSP then it is for the PS2. This isn't because of the content or sheer number of modes, even though the PSP version of Street 2 actually has more street events then the PS2 version. It's that the core gameplay does a great job of harnessing the portable-gaming experience—the game is just so fast paced. In fact, it's so easy to jump into a game, pick plays, and drive down the field within a matter of seconds that the temptation to take out the game to a score a quick touchdown is hard to resist. Still, taken as just a football game, it lacks some of the depth that makes the sport entertaining to begin with. Yes, you can still use all of the basic strategies associated with regular football, but you won't be totally hindered if you don't always adhere to them.

Also, some of Street 2's content just feels like filler, which is to say it isn't all that great. Many of the street events are plain garbage, such as the DDR knockoff in which you're supposed to mimic an opposing player's celebration moves. The controls in the street slalom are so shoddy that it's more annoying than entertaining. The other street events-coincidentally, the ones also found in the PS2 version-are entertaining for a few rounds but tend to get old pretty quickly. Thankfully, the NFL gauntlet and NFL challenge modes are there to pick up the slack in terms of offering a little bit of worthwhile variety to the main game. Hopefully, next time around, EA will just focus its efforts on making the arcadestyle football even better and not try to artificially add replay value to the game. « Giancario Varanini

PROS Quick gameplay great for the PSP CONS Too much filler content; gameplay could have a little more tweeling.

Pub. EA Sports Big Dev. Tiburon ESRS E MSRP \$49.98







TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR

in most ways, Tiger Woods is an ideal portable game. Golf's hole-by-hole structure makes for easily digestible chunks that are simple to get into and out of (especially with the sensible save-and-quit feature). The almost RPGlike system of leveling up your golfer makes for long-term playability, which is easier to take advantage of on a system you can carry with you at all times. And the sedate pacing means you don't have to devote quite as much attention to the game as you do with, say, Wipeout Pure, which means you can play in a jerky subway—or even walking down the street—and not have your environment negatively impact your game.

In fact, I'd say it is the perfect portable game were it not for the ludicrously long load times. We're talking something like three minutes from power-on to game time, with 30-second loads between holes. That's just ridiculous; I mean, the game looks great, and maybe it takes a lot of data to make that happen, but this is crazy.

And that's too bad, because the game looks and feels virtually identical to its PS2 counterparts. Just about everything you'd expect from a Tiger game is present and accounted for, from the analog swing to the extremely deep golfer-creation tool to the often laugh-out-loud funny (and

incredibly natural-sounding) commentary. Not quite everything is in here, but there's little you'll miss. More important, it feels just as good; yes, it takes a little practice to get your swing just right on the analog nub, but once you learn how to keep it straight, you'll be swinging like a pro.

The game could have used a few more options in the multiplayer arena, though: With only three party-play games and five wireless modes. it feels like a missed opportunity. Where are all the minigames from the recent PS2 Tiger titles? And while we're at it, where's the Internet-based infrastructure multiplayer?

Even so, this is an extremely solid—if uninspired—port of the Tiger franchise that's every bit as addictive as its PS2 counterparts. « Joe Rybicki

VERDICT This would have been the perfect portable game were it not for unbelievably long load times and a lack of imagination in multiplayer.

Puls. EA Sports Dev. EA Sports ESRS E MSRP \$49.50



NO CHEATING











SPIDER-MAN 2

While Spidey's swinging days data back to the Atari, it was the recent FS2 version of Spider-Man 2 that really captured the feeling of being an agile webslinger sorting out thugs and thwipping your way through the city, However, if you're looking for that free-roaming Spidey experience on your PSP, well, you'll have to wait. Spider-Man 2 for the PSP is more like the carrier tillers.

Which isn't a bad thing, because those seciner tilles are all pretty decent (if a bit for straightforward) action games that give a fair representation of Spidey's coolness. Spider-Man 2 for PSP maintains that consistency and offers the bonus of looking really good on the handheld system.

So while you can't websling freely around New York, you get a decent amount of variety in the game's 19 missions. While there's a whole lot of "run in and smack baddles," there's also as fair share of objectives like "save people,"

"defuse the bombs," and "web-up things before they fall." The boss battles are nicely done, with particular kudos to a fight in which you have to use Rhino as a weapon against Shocker. Unfortunately, despite how varied these missions are, they're also way short. You can finish each one in about 10 minutes—meaning the whole game takes around four hours. Yikes.

Also aggravating are the camera and the PSP's button layout. Camera changes are done on the D-pad and movement is on the analog nub, meaning you have to move your thumb to adjust the camera, which is pretty hard in the middle of combat. The camera itself is most annoying when tracking down airborne enemies, so the obligatory fight with the Vulture is: easily the most annoying one.

Spider-Man 2 is one of the inevitable decentbut nonewesome games that falls into any launch window, it's a thoroughly solid, if short, spin on the franchise, and it's worth at least a rental. Or it can get you by until a Spidey gamethat incorporates free-roaming webslinging is done on the PSP. < Thiorry Nguyen

PETER PARKER Looks great, rise mission variety, cool boss battles
REN REILLY Cran comera controls don't quite

BEN REILLY Crap camera, controls don't quite match the PSP layout, short

Pub. Activision Dev. Activision ESRET MSRP \$49.99

RATING





DARKSTALKERS CHRONICLE: CHAOS TOWER

Derkstalkers is an odd choice for the PSP considering the extensive number of better fighting games in Capcom's library, but this edition has its own unique cherm, or at least it will for fans of the series. Much like the Street Fighter Anniversary Collection, Darkstalkers Chronicle lets you pit different versions of the Darkstalkers cheracters against each other. So you can have Dimitri from the original game fight Sexquatch from Night Warriors, the second game in the series. It's also worth noting that the differences between the characters in each game are pretty minimal, so you won't really have any excessively unbalanced matches in



either the arcade or multiplayer modes. And while it's pretty awesome to engage in wireless multiplayer matches, the best mode is chaos tower. This mode offers the most variety and most incentive to keep playing the game because it not only features different match types with various stipulations (no punches or no special moves-things of that nature), but also lets you unlock items like art from each of the games. The arcade mode really doesn't offer enough to keep you interested for any prolonged period of time, but chaos tower does a good job of keeping you glued to your PSP as you climb the tower. Although Darkstalkers doesn't really possess a level of depth that hardcore fighting lans can appreciate, there's still an inherent layer of novelty in playing an arcade-quality fighting game on the go, even it it's not one of

PROS Pretty much a perfect arcade port, chace tower mode adds variety
CONS Not very deep, really old-school fighting mechanics

Pub. Capcom Dev. Capcom ESRB T MSRP \$39.99

Tab. Capcom

esome agent, as he's

hocker must have an

een a boss in every

Spider-Man 2: Enter

Spider-Man game since







APE ESCAPE: ON THE LOOSE RUN, MONKEYS, RUN

You may be among the adult human beings who still get a chuckle out of the concept of chasing and catching monkeys wearing flashing. lights on their heads, but I have to think that even the party-game aspect of the Ape Escape titles is of much greater appeal to the 12-andunder set, the vast majority of whom will never own PSPs (thanks to the price of entry) unless their parents have lost their minds.

On the Loose's best characteristic is that its simple platformer gameplay goals-chase monkeys, catch monkeys, collect coins, avoid various environmental pitfalls—are perfect for handheld gaming. There's naturally not a lot of depth (it's an Ape Escape game, after all), but that kind of clear cause-and-effect play often makes for a morning commute that seems to last mere minutes. Unfortunately, what the PSP can't offer is the two-analog-stick control scheme that has defined the Ape Escape games. Here, you use

the nub to control your character's movement and the Square, Triangle, and Circle buttons to control attacks, effectively quashing your ability to attack in all directions with the right analog stick, as you can in the original Ape Escape. And since the camera is controlled by the directional buttons, it tends to lag, which makes chasing those quick little monkeys a pain in the tuckus.

I eked a few enjoyable play sessions out of On the Loose, but the camera-control difficulties prompted me to ditch it for Lumines, which offers the same simple appeal but is infinitely more satisfying. « Kristen Salvatore

PROS Easy on the eyes, easy on the mind CONS Not especially challenging (or interesting), lacks the fun of the two-stick control scheme

Pub. SCEA Dev. SCEA ESRB E MSRP \$39.99



DID YOU KNOW.. hard as it may be to el eve after playing Smart Bomb, reachomb disposal experts do not n fact rotate tiles and refuse explosive





they're so freaking small, pop up in rooms i've

7 Power-ups in crates are good only if I need

and stripped of all my equipped weapons.

them right then-I can't store them for later use.

a Death results in me being booted back a level

9 Loading saves after I die involves quitting all

10 The game's design could not have been done

the way out of the game and then restarting.

with the PSP in mind-instead it plays like a

poor PS2 game that was ported over with no

adjustments for portability or a smaller screen.

No other game in the PSP launch window is so

miserably underachieving. « Dana Jongewaard

RENGOKU: THE TOWER OF PURGATORY

I The inadequate totorial is a stand-alone film that plays at the beginning of the game, so by the time you get to the game, you don't remember the commands

2 The interface is awkward and ugly.

The protagonist is decidedly uncool, If I'm playing as a robot, I want to be a metalloid, muscular, ass-kicking robot. In this game, I look and run like C-3PO. And when I equip weapons on my head-say a claw or a sword-I look stupid. 4 The environments are repetitious and boring You know it's bad when there are two doors on a level and you can't remember which one you came in and which one you need to exit through because you've been spacing out since the room looks the same as the last five did. 5 Non-ammo-dependent weapons lose power

and need to be recharged in a control room. They lose their power even if I just happen to

5 Enemies, who all look the same because

swing them through the air.

VERDICT This is the last PSP game you should: be buying. Pub. Konami Dev. Never-Land Company ESRB M MSRP \$39.99

already cleared.



SECOND OPINION

"I played it for 10 minutes and wanted to kill myself." - EGM's Brian



SMART BOMB

There are some games that are tough. There are games that are a little rough around the edges. And then there are the games that make me fantasize about reaching through the screen, yanking out a developer, and-at my expense!-wiping that smug grin right off his face.

We were already on thin ice when someone at Core Design decided that the best



way to liven up its puzzle game was to include laughably inappropriate cinemas about bomb disposal and paramilitary organizations-think Lumines with cutscenes from Metal Gear Solid 3. But silly as this may be, it isn't a deal breaker. The real problems, of course, come when you get to the game itself. Smart Bomb offers a menu of puzzles. Some are logic problems. For example, you'll rotate sections of wire to light lamps. Others are more action based, such as reflecting lasers back at a cannon with a moving mirror

The problem? The game hates you. Smart Bomb may be the first game in which you can die on the menu screen, simply for not choosing an option fast enough. Controls are sluggish-moving around the bits and bobs is an annoying exercise in slowpaced sloppiness. Worse, there's a counter furiously ticking down. As it decreases, the screen starts violently shaking, adding to the "fun." Failure means starting the level (and working through the puzzles) all over again. Oh, yeah-the computer screws up bits that you've already solved while you play. It seems to me that Core designed this game specifically to cause an influx of broken PSPs to arrive at Sony's customer service center after frustrated gamers hurl them to the ground in disgust

The worst part might be the fact that there are clever ideas here. The puzzles alone would be enough, guys. My advice to the developers is next time, skin the shaking, the timers, and the laughable cinemas and spend more time polishing and testing. Then maybe your bomb would be worth

RDICT A competent, if unimaginative, puzzler that is positively hamstrung by a perverse (and utterly pervasive) desire to see the player fail.

Pub. Eidos Dev. Core Design ESRB E10+ MSRP \$39.99







THE AVIATOR

(Leonardo Dicaprio, Cate Blanckett)
THE WIND BENEATH HIS WINGS by John Scalzi

The Aviator is the story of a man doomed by his own demons, and that man is not Howard Hughes, whom this film portrays in his young and dashing days, not in his "creepp billionaire old guy who keeps his urine in jars" days. No, the man is Martin Scorsese, who directed this movie. After the relative disappointment of Gangs of New York, which was deemed too violent and icky for a Best Picture (or Best Director) Osear win, Scorsese built this cunning cinematic contraption, which was designed to trap Osears like a no-pest strip catches flies. It was clear skies until Clint Eastwood swooped in out of nowhere with Milline Dollar Baby

If Scorsese cannot win an Oscar with *The Aviator*, he may never win one at all. It is unfailing Oscar bait: It's a middlebrow biopic of a mid-20th-century notable with psychological issues that's lavshly produced, and its charismatic star (DiCaprio getting his "now you are a man" Oscar nomination) is ably assisted by a series of Oscar-noticed wingmen and women like Alan Alda (nominated, didn't win) and Cate Blanchett as Kate Hep-burn (who did win). And it doesn't stink—not the director's best, but perfectly acceptable. It could have won. It should have won, especially since Eastwood aiready had Best Director and Best Picture Oscars

And yet, here we are in May, with Scorsese still Oscar-less. I don't know if the Oscars really are an obsessive object of desire for him, but if they are, perhaps this film will convince him that you can't triangulate your way into the Academy's graces. Maybe now Scorsese will just get it out of his system and simply make great movies without worrying if they are Oscar balt. One can hope.







Ethan's a good cop. Larry's a bad man. They fight crime! Or, more accurately, they fight the nasty cops who have surrounded the precinct house in which Ethan's a cop and Larry's a prisoner, looking to kill them and everyone else in the building because, well, that's what the movie says they should do, it's moder ately fun to watch Ethan and Larry join forces and shoot people in this remake of a 1976 John Carpenter film, but keep your expecta tions at that level, won't you?







Dennis Quaid thinks he's a corporate hotshot until he's replaced by a real corporate hotshot who is half his age (Topher Grace) and who is dating his daughter to boot. But then this corporate satire swerves and becomes something with an actual human heart. It's also another left turn from director Paul Weitz, showing that there is indeed more to him than American Pie-and in deference to that, this will (proba bly) be the last time I refer to that flick in refer ence to Weitz. Way to move on. Weitz)

RATING

PATING



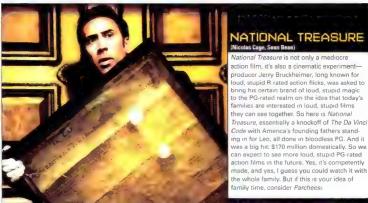




The smartest movie about sex you'll ever see-or the sexiest movie about academic research. Neeson plays Alfred Kinsey, the researcher who hauled sex out of the gutter and took it seriously as research so that today when people hyperventilate about sex, at least they can do it from an informed perspective. Kinsey was a strange fellow, although probably not how you'd expect, and this film intelligently captures that, as well as the implications of his research on the people he knew







was a big hit: \$170 million domestically. So we can expect to see more loud, stupid PG-rated

RATING

the whole family. But if this is your idea of family time, consider Parcheesi.

May 17 Kinse

May 24 The Aviation

DUD RELEASES

National Tressure

Alone in the Dark In Good Company The Merchant of Venice

Son of the Mask Team America White Noise

May 16

SON OF TH

If someone came into my office and said. 'I have a great idea! Let's make a sequel to a 10 vear-old Jim Carrey film, only without Jim Car. rey, and let's spend \$80 million doing it!" you know what I would do? First, I would lock my office door. Then I would turn up my stereo. Then I would take the ax I keep for just this purpose, and I would hack that person into tiny pieces, and I would feed his remains to the tank of piranhas I also keep for just this purpose. No jury would convict me

RATING





LIFE AQUATIC (Bill Murray, Owen Wils

RATING

THE MERCHANT OF ny Irans Al Pacion)

At Paging dives into one of the most problem

atic Shakespearean roles to modern audi-

ences: Shylock the moneylender. He's prob-

lematic because he's a Jew, and no matter

how you slice this play, it stinks of anti-Semi

tism. This version puts the anti-Semitism in

context, but otherwise it lets the viewer deal

with the political implications and gets to the

acting. Pacino doesn't chew scenery as much

as you'd expect; he hits the right notes for a

complicated character in a complicated play

No one's happier than I that Bill Murray is being taken seriously as an actor, and he's great here as the sort of underwater explorer you'd get if you crossed Jacques Cousteau with a pound of really potent weed. The problem is that director Wes Anderson comes off as having partaken of an economy-sized barrel of kind bud as well, so what you end up with is sort of like Pee-Wee's Playhouse on a tropical beach. Sure, it sounds good, but for me it was a little more forced whimsy than I could take.





iprii 19 **Hallboy** Daggers Pirates of the Ca The Curse of the Black Pearl

Hero National Transium Reign of Fire

Resident Evil 2



that's just his agent on a cell phone as he enters a tunnel, applogizing to Keaton for not getting him better work. This is a goofy little tale that plays up "electronic voice phenome-

non," in which dead people supposedly communicate through random static. Keaton does what he can to make it seem like he's caught up in all this but he's an actor not a miracle worker, and this film needs a miracle other than static-filled voices from the grave





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Click on the survey name: 2005 GAMER'S VOICE PANEL SURVEY and type in this UNIQUE ID CODE: opmgamer

Complete all the questions in this initial survey.

If pro-quality for the pro-



REPLAY

TUNING LOGIC



PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA

Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides OPM with top-of-the-line strategies every month. in this issue, Prima's strategy gurus share their expertise on how best to tune up your car in Gran Turismo 4. Trust us, these guys know their stuff.

NSIDE

- NO STRINGS ATTACHED

- The ultimate in wireless setups

 REVIEW ARCHIVE

 Every PS2 garme we've ever reviewed, plus bonus tricks!

 STAR WARS RETROSPECTIVE

 The Force's PS2 success stories

- e only gaming comic you'll ever need
 HATEVER HAPPENED TO WARHAVIK?
 successful game without a sequel? Is this Bizarro World?
- A successful game without a sequent is the bull of the timesPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT
 Free Radical tells us how to make the perfect map
 READER REVIEWS
 Awesomeness is next to "God"-liness



TUNING LOGIC

YOUR ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR PERFECTING

INTAKE & EXHAUST

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Dollar for dollar, there's no better upgrade. Along with the racing chip, this is one of the first upgrades you should make. You'll notice increased low-end torque and slightly higher top speeds with even the basic kit. But as you upgrade to the higher tiers, the gains get smaller and smaller; it costs more to make smaller increases beyond a certain level.



Cost: 1,800 Cr.

BRAKES

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

until you get a car that's worth keeping.

When tested from 100 mph, we noticed a

15% to 20%. This upgrade is a no-brainer.

reduction in our overall stopping distances by

One of the best, if not the best, bargains in the game. You should expect to see a 3% to 5% gain in overall horsepower. This is a very good buy.





This kit revs a little higher, adding 7% to 10% in horsepower to your base value. For an extra 1,900 Cr., you can have the full racing kit.



Cost: 4,800 Cc.

Brake upgrades are often overlooked, but they make a noticeable difference on the track. For those

of you who drive with a realistic approach (i.e. get hard on the brakes), the racing brakes are a

"must-buy" for 4,700 Cr. The brake controller is ideal for controlling spinouts, but for 10,600 Cr.

Cr. 4.700

you can spend your money elsewhere and get better results. Bon't mess with the brake controlls

A full race exhaust and intake usually adds 10% to 15% to your base HP level. Not a bad gain for 4,800 Cr. With this kit installed, you'll definitely notice the gains on the track.



DRIVETRAIN

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Swapping transmissions can be a double-edged sword if you're not sure what you're dealing with. Siapping a full racing transmission on your otherwise "stock" car lan't the best thing to do, unless you know how to go in a on the track. The adjustable LSDs work well for fine-tuning but are sort of expensive for the relatively small gains you'll notice on the track

Cost: 5,600 Cr.

A solid upgrade for the price. You'll notice increased acceleration and an increased overall top speed.



Cost: 5,700 Cr.

Remember that higher gear ratios (overall) equal more wheelspin per engine revolution.



Cost: 10,200 Cr.

Keep your ratios close and this transmission is a tuner's best friend.



Cr. 10,200

Make this upgrade only after you start doing upgrades to your engine.



As you do more mode to your engine, you'll need a better clutch. This one is good for midhorsepower levels.



The strongest of all clutches, this model is for extreme turbo or NA applications where very high HP is on tap.



Lets you gain RPMs by reducing the rotating mass of the unit itself. Excellent purchase.









Cr. 10.600

This controls the brake balance and is essential when balancing a car.

This decreases your braking power but

increases stability. High Value Overall This increases your braking power but

decreases stability. Low Front Value, High Rear Value

This increases oversteer during braking. High Front Value, Low Stear Value

This increases understeer during braking.



Lighter than the spons model and offers even less rotating mass. Works better with more horsepower



The lightest and strongest of all flywheels, this model is for hardcore race cars only.

Cost 4,250 Cc

The 1-way LSD adjusts acceleration slippage. A nice upgrade, but expensive.

Cost: 4,250 Cr.

The 1.5-way adjusts acceleration slippage and also a bit of deceleration slippage. It's a hybrid

Cost: 4.250 Cr.

This LSD controls both acceleration and fulf deceleration slippage. A full 2-way unit.

Cost: 6,300 Cr.

The ultimate in adjustable rear ends, the variable model is the best overall value in the LSD. market.

This is primarily for rally cars and offers a little bit more control over your differential slippage.

Cost: 2,750 Cc

You won't notice much difference on the track with this upgrade. We sure didn't.



PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

There is no doubt that the engine is the most expensive part of your car to upgrade. With those Benjamins, though, expect big results—especial naturally aspirated engines—except maybe a supercharger), this is the only place to squeeze that real power out of your car. Nitrous is a new feature for the Gran Turismo series, and its been implemented at a price that makes it affordable for everyone.



Cr. 4,900





Cr. 5.500







Cr. 1,500



Nitrous axide (N₂0)---or just "nitrous" as it's referred to in GT4-is used to increase horsepower levels at the push of a button. Nitrous oxide works its magic when it's heated to 570 F (at this point it splits into oxygen and nitrogen. When it does so, it allows more oxygen into the engine and in turn, lets it hurn more fuel. As it's being injected into the combustion chambers of an engine, it veporizes and provides a significant secondary effect on performance: It cools the intake air. When you reduce the intake air temperature—as seen in the various cold-air intakes available on the marketyou increase the intake's air density charge, making even more oxygen available inside the cylinder walls and allowing even more fuel to be delivered safely. In GT4, you can purchase nitrous oxide, as well as control the amount injected. The

HEIGH IS NOO



Cr. 4.250

More than twice the price of a stage 1, but it gives 15% to 20% more power. You can skip stage 1 and go straight for stage 2 if you desire.

up to 50 additional HP to your engine's base

output level. An excellent buy for 4,900 Cr.!

This is like the stage 4 turbo kit for NA cars. It's also ridiculously expensive, but you'll get incredible gains for the price.

Porting and polishing your cylinder heads creates decent HP gains. Because of the high cost, though, leave it for cars you plan on keeping.

This is the most cost ineffective way to make horsepower. Only add this to a car after you've: done every other mod in the book.

Cost: 8,500 Cr.

This option is not available to cars with cylinder walls bored out to the max-i.e., the vast majority. For others, it's a decent upgrade.

An extremely valuable upgrade that adjusts your engine's spark and timing curves, raising your shift points and increasing horsepower.

Cost: 5,000 Cc.

If you plan on doing a lot of drag racing, this is the fastest and most cost-effective way to shave serious time off your quarter-mile runs.

shot" is actually the size

of the hit your motor gets,

which is determined by jet size. The shot, along

with how long the button

is depressed, will deter-

mine the actual perform-

ance increase you'll see

іп уола сан





TURBO

PERFORMANCE QUERUIEM

Purchase the turbo that matches the overall power level of your car, or you'll be left with gobe of turbo lag and unwanted side effects. An intel cooler resembles a radiator, housing large passages for the intake flow using either outside air or water to lower the temperature of the intake. flow inside. In other words, it adds horsepower for a relatively low cost. The bottom line is that if you've got a turbocharged car, this is the place to go for massive HP gains. Don't make the mistake of saving for a stage; turbo kit, stapping it on, and thinking you're'done. The rest of the car needs to be upgraded in conjunction with the turbo parameter. proper performance adjustments on the track.

Cost: 4,800 Cr.

The stage 1 turbo kit usually offers about a 10% increase in overall HP. Most of it is available at: low RPMs, but you'll notice it throughout the powerband.

The stage 2 turbo kit usually offers about a 20% increase in overall HP, most of which is available at low-mid RPMs.

Cost: 42,500 Cr.

The stage 3 turbo kit usually offers about a 35% increase in HP, most of which is available at mid-high RPMs. Make sure your car is set up to handle the power this turbo adds.







Cr. 13,500



The stage 4 turbo kit offers a 125% increase inoverall HP, most of which is available at high RPMs only. This turbo is for select high-revving applications only.

Cost: 1,800 Cr.

A very nice increase for the money, and as long as your car is turbocharged, this should be one. of the first upgrades you make.

A larger and even more efficient version of the standard sports intercooler, this model is for higher horsepower applications.

Cost: 13,500 Cr.

Supercharging is a new feature to the Gran Turismo series and is well worth the 13,500 Cr. price tag. For NA cars that can't go the turbo . route, this is your only viable option for forced induction. Supercharging works by forcing air into the intake by a crank-controlled turbine. It adds serious horsepower and increases throttle

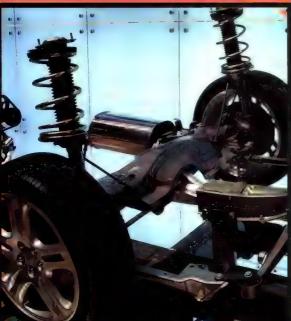












SUSPENSION

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Suspension parts are where serious cornering improvements are made. Everything "handling" related is controlled and adjusted here, so be prepaned to spend some serious time on the test tracks checking your results once you start twesking. For the money, the best bat is to save the fully customizable suspension and go from there:

Cost: 3,200 Cr.

This is a solid upgrade that provides increased dampening and overall tighter response in and out of corners.

Slightly better than the sports model, but with a significantly higher cost. We usually skip this model and go for the fully customizable setup.





OCTABO

The ultimate in adjustable suspensions, this kit lets you control every aspect of your front and rear suspension settings.



Damper bound is the act of the shock absorber going up, and damper rebound is this assembly coming back down. Low Rear Rebound, High Front Bound Makes your car very loose into turns. Low Front Rebound, High Rear Bound

Makes your car very loose out of turns. High Rear Rebound, Low Front Bound Makes your car very tight into turns. High Front Rebound, Low Rear Box Makes your car very tight out of turns.



GOT BOOST

Turbocharging is a type of forced induction that works by compressing the air flowing into the engine. Much like the end result of nitrous, com pressing this air lets the engine squeeze more air into a cylinder, which obviously, allows more fuel be added to the mix. Adding more fuel equals more power

Turbos are rated by the amount of "boost" they create, which is used ally measured in psi. In order to achieve this boost, the turbos use exhaust output from the engine to spin a small turbine (which can spin at speeds in excess of 100,000 RPM), which in turn spins an air pump. The actual amount of air that's pumped back into the intake is determined by the wastegate. The wastegate is a valve that can sense the amount of boost being created, thereby controlling what goes in and

An intercooler is much like a radiator for your car, except it's designed specifically to cool the intake charge that the turbo pushes out. Remember, the air being pumped out of a turbo is HOT--and hot is bad. Before going straight back into the engine, it's routed through a series of cooling fins and then pumped back into the intake. Intercoolers are an efficient and cost-effective way to bring serious HP levels to a turbocharged car.

TOE IN & TOE OUT TIPS

Keep these settings pretty close to stock unless your car is extremely loose or tight going in and out of turns. Too much variance from stock induces spinouts.

Camber is responsible for controlling the traction of the front and rear wheels. This is a very easy setting to control, aithough each car has a completely different "perfect" setup.

Low Value Overall

This is a good way to get more speed on the straights, but you will be a little slower through the turns because of loss of traction.

You'll get great traction in corners, but your speed down the straights will suffer.

The most important of all suspension settings are your spring rates. The real trick is finding that perfect setting for your particular car, which this set of tips should help you find. One thing to remember is that your car needs to be well balanced in both stiffness and body roll. This is usually best accomplished without a huge variance from front to rear settings.

In general, this makes your car ride more consistently and perform with predictability. It's less responsive and tends to have more body roll, but it's much better for elevation changes (bumps and jumps). High Value Overall

A high setting brings a more responsive feel when you go into turns, because it has much less body roll from side to side. If you set this value too high, however, your car will become very unstable and spinning out will be much more likely.

Low Value Overall

A low setting brings more body roll and greatly decreased liveliness through the turns. However, you'll be much more stable through rough spots of the course.

High Value Overall

This produces a little less body roll and greatly increased liveliness through the turns. You'll easily lose control over bumps and jumps if it's too high, though.

TRES

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The racing/qualifying tires are best if you're looking to turn out amazing lap times or if you're going for all-out grip. For endurance events, though, a harder tire works better since you won't need to change them so often. Dirt and snow tires are for rally events and shouldn't be

TANE ARE H
Cost: 0 Cr.

Cost: 0 C

Cost: 5,100 C

Cost: 6,000 Cr.



Cost: 10,500 Cr

Cost: 22,500 Cr.

Cost: 22,500 Cr.

Cost 22,500 Cr

OTHER



PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

For the money, this section offers a lot. Weight reduction makes cars handle tighter, brake faster, and accelerate with more response. There's aren't many upgrades that do all three of those things in one shot. The rigidity upgrades are great for endurance events because they keep body roll to a minimum

Cost: 10,500 Cr.

For 4WD cars only, this lets you control the amount of torque that goes to the front and rear differentials. Very helpful for 4WD cars.



Cost: 1,200 Cr.

This stage removes unwanted parts to make the car lighter. A lighter car handles, accelerates, and brakes better.



At stage 2, parts are replaced with lighter materials to make an even larger difference on the track. Worth every penny.



Adding a roll cage and tower bars raises the overall rigidity of the entire car. Very expensive, but worth it for your highest-end supercars.



Cost: 22,000 Ca

Expensive, and the results aren't quite as dramatic as stages 1 or 2. For your hardcore race cars, though, this is a "must have" upgrade.



A car's body takes wear and tear as you drive it. but this upgrade keeps everything fresh. Expensive, but crucial for high-end race cars.



After spending some quality time with the PSP, we have found wires to be increasingly more annoying. While you can't get rid of all of them (we still love you, Mr. Edison), some can be banished for good.



DELICONE TO SUPLICION'S PSP LAURICH CENTER

PS2 WIRELESS ONLINE

GET RID OF THOSE BROADBAND CABLES

The combo of a wireless router and a wireless access point can rid you of most broadband wires, and the technology has been around long enough that many systems are idiotproof to set up. (We sent our least tech-savvy editor home with one, and the operation was successful.) This system is a full-on solution for wireless access—with it, you can take multiple Wi-Fi-enabled devices (desktops, laptops, PSPs) online at the same time.

To make your PS2 Wi-Fi receptive, you'll need a wireless access point, which plugs into your PS2 Network Adaptor with a standard Ethernet cable. Not every adapter on the market will work with your PS2—you need to be sure that you choose one that can connect with an Ethernet cable rather than a USB cable (many offer both options). We played with the D-Link Wireless Garning Adapter, which lists for \$120 but can be found in the \$100 range.

For the router, we experimented with the D-Link DGL-4800. The advantage of this system for gamers is that it's programmed to automatically streamline gaming traffic and prioritize it over other types of files; if you're flighting for bendwicht with other users in the house, it's a nice option. However, at \$160, it costs more than other wireless routers (which run around \$100), so if your primary concern is just getting rid of the wires, you may want to shop for cheaper options. Keep in mind that buying an 802.11b router (the DGL-4800 uses 802.11g technology) will result in a significantly slower connection—but also a significantly lower price.

Setup is simple. Just insert the router between your wire-anchored computer and the broadband connection, and the router will automatically joke up Wi-Fi-enabled devices. Then, using the configuration discs from the adapter and router, go shead and set up your network. There are wizards for those who are non-tech savry, and the advanced setup is still comprehensible to those who are intimidated by their office's IT person.

If a full-fledged network is too taxing on your waller, you can still connect just your PS2 wirelessly with Nyko's Wireless Net Extender. Simply plug one end into your Internet connection, then plug the receiver into your PS2 Network Adaptor, and you're instantly online—no software configurations required. We found the Wireless Net Extender priced as low as \$60 online, so shop around. «

PORTABLE INTERNET

ACK YOUR PSP FOR WIRELESS WEB ACCESS

Those of you who bought Wipsout Pure looking for downloadable content on launch day might have been disappointed to see "Wipsout Pure downloads coming soon...hold on!" after selecting "downloads" from the Main menu. As of press time (two weeks after launch), there are still none available. But one network-savry PSP owner, who goes by the name of fugimax, figured out a way to put that Internet-ready code to use. And it involves absolutely no risk to the game—or your PSP.

For this experiment, you'll need your PSP configured to access a wireless hot spot. Create a new infrastructure-network connection identical to your standard connection and select Custom for the Address Settings. Choose Automatic for IP Address Settings (unless your hot spot has specific IP requirements; speak to your provider if you're not sure), but select Manual for DNS Settings. Now, for the Primary DNS, enter the following number: 67.171.70.72. (Leave the Secondary DNS at 0.0.0.0.) Cortfirm your settings and save.

Now load up Wipeout Pure and go to downloads. Instead of the "Hold on!" screen, you'll be greeted with a simple portal that fugimex set up with some garner-friendly links on: It. You're not limited to the sites he links to, however: There's a URL entry box at the bottom you can use to check out any site you like.

The shoulder buttons appear to equate to the Back and Forward buttons in a standard browser. Square is Stop, Circle is Refresh, and X selects links. Simply scroll around with the D-pad to see areas offscreen. Of course, most websites aren't currently formatted for PSP viewing, but you'll be surprised by how good some of them look. For a striking demonstration of the PSP's screen, for example, you might visit news_valoo_com and look at any recent news image. Now load it up-ine a PC and notice the difference.

It's a given that one day soon an official Web browser will be released for PSP...but until then, you can experience yet another amazing feature of this amazing little machine.

Thanks to fugimax for creating this simple hack. Visit his site at genius.fugimax.com to see if he's come up with anything new and also to tell him how freakin' cool he is. «



WIRELESS CONTROLLER

If you want to cut the most obvious of wires, our recommendation is Logitech's Cordless Action Controller for PS2. The signal is strong, and battery longevity is good (the company's claim of more than 50 hours with rumble effects turned on is right on in our experience).

TRICKS AND title. Names in orange indicate a score of 5 out of

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GAME	PUBLISHED	1009s F	a e
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Liynasty Warr crs	Koe	•••	9
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INVULNERABILITY

Airforce Deita Strike

pe Escape Primed & Pumped

PS2 III			
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hack//MUTATION	Banda	****	6
hack/OUTBREAK	Banda	****	7
hack/QUARANTINE	Bandai	****	71
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	••••	5
4x4 EV0	GOD Games	****	4
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sport-	••••	
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	Namco		5
Ace Combat 5 The Unsung War	Namco	****	
Activision Anthology	Activ sion	****	6
Aero Elite Combat Academy	Sega	***	6
The Adventures of Cook e & Cream	Agete.		4
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Airblade	Namco	****	5

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A Star Baseba 2004	Acclaim	***	6
AlStar Basebal 2005	Acclaim	991	8
Alter Echo	THQ	••	7
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the Lad. Twinght of the Spirits	Sony CEA		7
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PUBLISHER SCORE ISSUE Aties ...

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So you think it just might be possible that Episode III won't entirely redeem the debacle that is the prequel trilogy? Yesh, us too. To help you get the bad taste out of your mouth, we've put together a refreshing palate cleanser of Star Wars entertainment that's good-you can even check out two of them (Lego Star Were and Star Were Battlefront) on this month's disc!

LEGO STAR WARS

Darth Maul has been described with many adjectives-- "evil," "menacing," "terrifying"-but Lego Star Wars marks the first time that "adorable" has been one of them. This game lets you relive the prequel trilogy in Legoland-play as Lego versions of Obi-Wan, Yoda, even R2-D2. There's also co-op play available, and with the tokens you collect along the way, you can purchase playable versions of popular characters such as Jango Fett and Darth Vader. Lego Star Wars sets a great precedent for movie games by cutting out all the boring bits of the trilogy. Our only complaint is that cutting out the boring parts means the game is pretty short.

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

The Star Wars movies may be full of wooden acting and hack dialogue. but it's hard to argue the greatness of the battles. And therein lies the beauty of Battlefront: It gives you the opportunity to be a part of every major Star Wars battle. Choose whether to play on the side of the Rebelli or the Empire, the Republic or the Trade Federation. While the game's strengths lie in the multiplayer aspect, Battlefront's fun to tackle on your own as well. Strap on that ray gun and enjoy.

RATING [00000]

STAR WARS RACER REVENGE

Back in 1999, everyone agreed that Star Wers Racer was the best game to emerge from the Episode I hypefest. Made for the N64, it's based on the pod-racing sequences in The Phantom Menace, one of the few high points of George Lucas' muddled work. But as good as that original game is, no one was begging for a sequel, especially on a different platform Which isn't to say developer Rainbow Studios (Splashdown and the excellent first two ATV Offroad Furys) didn't deliver a strong effort in Star Wars Racer Revenge. Set eight years after Episode I, Sebulba is back for more spanking by Anakin on the pod-racing circuit in 13 tracks across five worlds. With an emphasis on aggressive action, Racer Revenge's control is tight and its track design is competent. The only big letdown? It is short, very short (most could finish the game in about five hours).



STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

LucasArts' first game for the PS2 draws upon the company's legacy of pretty dam good flight-based games set in the Ster Wars universe (like Rebel Assault and X-Wing for the PC and Rogue Squadron for the N64). The result is, well, pretty darn good. In 14 well-designed missions, Star Wars Starfighter lets you pilot one of three distinct craft, with the Naboo N-1 starfighter the centerpiece. While it isn't the longest game you'll ever play and a few of the missions could have benefited from a bit more polish, Star Wars Starfighter offers action aplenty and to this day is one of the better flight-based games for the PS2.



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	Jimmy Neutron	Attack of the Two	S. My CEA		00
75	u mmy Neutron	, Mad Trix	S. M GEA Kes THQ 300	***	63 88 54
74	u mmy Neutron	, Mad Trix	S. M GEA Kes THQ 300	***	63 88 54 80
75	u mmy Neutron	, Mad Trix	S. M GEA Kes THQ 300	000 01 001	63 88 54 80 69
74 5	ummy Neutron nov Mose ex udge Dredd I The Jungle Book urassic Park	, Mad Trix Dredd vs. Death ox. Rhythmin, Grocvs Operation Genes s	S.M GEA x es THQ 300 Evo ved Games Ubisoft Universal no	*** ** *** *** ***	63 88 54 80 63 68
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74 *** *4 88 81	ummy Neutron nny Mose ey udge Dredd ("e vungle Boi viassic Park t I World Gran karaoke Revoli viaske Revoli	, Mad Trix Oredd vs Death ox Rhythmin Grocive Operation Genesis nd Prix Lition Lition Volume 2	Sun CEA Kes THO 300 Evolved Games Ubisoft Universal ni Koram	000 001 000 00001 00	63 88 54 80 63 68
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74 88 88 88 91 46 52 87 62 63 67 77 88 88 88 88 88 88 88	aren, Neutron min Mose e Judge Dred C The Lungle Bo Jasse Park 1 Mona Gran Naroke Reconstruction of the Lungle Bo Jasse Park 1 Mona Gran Naroke Reconstruction of the Lungle Reconstruction of	Mad five Dreath or Grocks Death or Grocks Death or Rhythm in Grocks to one risk of the result of the	Suny CEA Source Control of the Cont	000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 00	63 88 82 69 68 77 75 86 61 42 39 51 76 88 87 67 42 61
74 88 88 88 88 88 65 61 62 63 63 64 65 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 8	uneny Neutron with More in Judge Dreaf of The Lungle Bol Lases C Park S Ward School Record Facilities of the Lungle Bol Lases C Park S Ward School Record Facilities of the Lases C Park Record Facilities C P	Mad fix Dread is Death on Rhythmin Grocks on Proceeds to Proceedings to Procee	Suny CEA Suny C	000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 00	63 88 87 75 88 87 86 87 85 88 87 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85
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74 52 54 58 58 58 59 52 58 57 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 58	uneny Neutron with More in Judge Dreaf of The Lungle Bol Lases C Park S Ward School Record Facilities of the Lungle Bol Lases C Park S Ward School Record Facilities of the Lases C Park S Ward S Ward Facilities of the Lases C Park S Ward S W	, Mad fix Dredd is Death on Rhymmin Grocket on Rhymmin Grocket on Rhymmin Grocket on Prix Litton No Limbo No Li	Suny CEA See over dispression of the see over dispression	000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 00	63 88 82 63 63 77 86 61 42 39 51 55 88 88 87 67 42 42 42 42 43 43 44 44 45 46 47 47 48 48 48 48 48 48 48 48 48 48 48 48 48
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lovely pot, kratos.

It is the Chalice
of Torment. From it,
I will drink the blood
of a thous

It would also
look nice holding some
Presh wildflowers in a
breakfast nook.

Yes.
That was my
other idea.

That is a

GAME	PUBLISHER SI	ORE ISSUE
e gends of Wrestin g	Accla m •	04 5a
egends of Wrestling II	Accla m .	65
Legion The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	66 59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media 🌘	44 51
Lego Star Wars	Grant Int	••• 92
Leisure Suit Earry Magna Cum Laude Vive	ndı Universa 🌘	01 87
nony Stickets A Series of Unfortunate Ever	ns Activ sion	89
Lethal Skies	Sammy •	• 58
uthal Sxies II	Sammy •	004 74
noney Tunes Back in Action	EA Games •	76
ord Atho Ross that was a single	Baccobe .	001
The land in the Board Tipe Street or was a	A Games ♥	6989 75
The Lord of the Rings The Third Age	EA Games •	• 88
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Town	rs EA Games 💌	**** 62
wrider	Jaleco •	4 77
Lip nine 3rd Treasure of the Sorcerer K	ng Banda •	••• 78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter Vive	nd universa .	71
Mad Maestro	Eidos, Fresh	◆◆ 5€
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports .	0001 3:
Maaden NF 2002	EA Sports .	0001 In
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports •	**** 60
Madden NR. 2004	EA Sports •	**** 72
* Madden NFL 2005	EA Sports •	0001 8
Mafia	Gathering •	994 79
Magic Penge The Quest for Color	Agetec •	••• 69
* Major League Baseball 2K5	2K Games •	••• 9°
Maice	Mud Dack	64 50
Manhunt	Rockstar •	004 7E
Le Mark of Kr	Sony CEA .	 50
Marvel vs Capcom 2	Capcom •	000 61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Act v sion •	••• E
Max Payne	Rockstar •	OOO 53
Max Payne 2 The Fal. of Max Paye		

GAME	PLBLINGR	SCORE	MILE:	
Maximo: Ghosts to Glery	Capcem	***1	54	
Tix no vs Arn y of Zin	Capcom	****	-	
McFarlane's Evil Prophecy	Konami	4	84	ı
MDK2 Armageddon	things,	0001	41	
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	****	58	ı
Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA Games	0001	76	ı
ga Man Arin versary Collection	Capcom	***1		ı
V ga Man X Command Mission	Capcom		86	ı
Mega Man X7	Capcom		7.4	ı
Mega Man X8	Capcom	***	86	ı
Wern Back II Alen Escape	Inlog ames		ьО	N
Nercenaries	LicasArts	****	89	ı
* . Arms G ton in the System Liver	nd Universa	****		ı
Marin Sour Solio & Soto of Littery	Bend	****	51	ı
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	****	67	
Metal Geer Solid 3: Snake Eater	Konami	****	88	
Metropo ismania	Natsumr	•••	-	
Midnight Club	Rockstar	****	30	
* Windowski Charles	Tildelar			
Minway Arcade Treasures	Mario,	***1		
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	Midway	****	87	
Mixe Tyson Heavyweight Boxing (Codemasters	•	58	
¥ nor ty Report	Activ soon	001	6%	ı
Miss Collinoss bie Operation Surma	Atar	••	7.7	
*4 ster Mosquito	E dos Fresh		56	ı
M. B 2004	Sony CEA	***	67	
MLB 2005	Sony CEA		89	
 MLB 2006 	Seny CEA	****	91	
1.1.B S ugFest 20-03	Midway	****	59	
MLB StugFest 20 04	Midway	****	67	
· MLB SlugFest Loaded				
WED Study est Engineer	Midway		83;	
Mobile c ght Force 2	M dway XS Games		83 ; 69	۱

Manual	GAME		PUBLISHER	SCORE	18846
Main S. F. Gundam Zeo in Front Sansas	* 1 1 S 16 man	Flowration vs Zec	r Birds		
Monopory Party	M bit Sulf Gundarr	Jou ney to vaboro	Banda		48
Monster 4 A4 Masters of Mere	M b . S. t Gundam	Zeo (Front	Bindar	***	54
Monster 4x4 Masters of Mers	oo'		Grave		75.
Monster Rancher 3 Techno	Monopoly Party		Intogrames	***	65
Monater Bancher 3	Monster 4x4 Masters	of Meta	ub soft	991	7.7
Minister Rancher 4 Techno	Monster Hunter		Capcom	****	86
Moral Kombat Decelly Alliance	Mnrister Rancher 3		Tecmo	****	60
Morral Kombat Decelly Alliance	Monster Rancher 4		Tecmo	****	76.
MortoRP	* sters no		Sc , CFA		-
MandGP	Mortal Kombat: Dead	Ily Alliance	Midway		64
MoroGP 2 Namo Sq.	"forts Komba" Dec	eptor	Mona,	****	
Mortor Mayer	MotoGP		Namco	****	39
Motor Maynem	MotoGP 2		Namco	****	€ 53
MTV Mass Generator? Codemasters 40 *** Miss Generator (**) Codemasters 40 *** MTV S Celeony Deathmatch Gramm Games 16 *** MTX Monotox Act son 40 *** Miss Monotox 10 52 *** Miss Monotox 50 51 *** Miss Miss Samura Legend Square Fins 40 *** Miss Bashar 2003 EA Sports 40 *** MMP Basebar 2003 EA Sports 40 *** MMP Basebar 2004 EA Sports 40 *** MMP Basebar 2005 EA Sports 40 *** MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carrisichee THO 40 *** MX Superf y Featuring Ricky Carrisichee THO 40 *** MMS va APV Unesamed THO 40 *** MMY APV Linesamed FA Sports 60 *** MMY APV Linesam	MotoGP 3		Namco	****	4 61
Miss Green Tes smeS Cacemasters	Motor Mayhem		Intogrames		47
MTX Seleoney Deathmaten Gotham Games 44 15	MTV Music Generato	· 2 Gr	odemasters	***	40
MIX Motorax Act soor 4 20 Missan Samura Legend Square Fix 5 5 Missan Samura Legend Square Fix 5 5 Missan Samura Legend Square Fix 5 5 Miss Maker Mag y 6 5 Mix Pasanbat 2003 EA Sports 6 6 MAMP Basebat 2004 EA Sports 6 6 MAY 2002 Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 7 MX Superf y Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 6 MMX Superf y Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 6 MMX Superf y Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 6 MMX Superf y Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 6 MMX Superf y Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 6 MMX Superf y Featuring Ricky Cermichee THO 6 6			ndemasters		82
The Mummy Returns	MT Vs Celebrity Deat	nmaten Goth	am Games	01	76
Mysseh Samura Legend	• MTX Mototrax		Act son	001	0.8
Mays c Maker	e Mummy Returns		Un versa.	01	52
MAY P Baseba 2003	Mi,sash Samura Leg	end 5	Square Enix	***	91
MMP Baseball 2004 EA Sports ••••• 8 MMP Baseball 2005 EA Sports •••• 9 MM 2002 Featuring Rev Carmichae THO ••• 9 27 MM Riber THO ••• 9 5 *MM Superify Featuring Rev, Carmichae THO ••• 9 91 *MMN x- ATV Unleashed Son, CEA ••• 9 91 *My, Shreet Obadat ••• 6 60 Most II Exit Dabadat ••• 6 61	Miss o Maker		Magix	****	63
MAY 2007 Featuring Ricky Carmichae	MUP Baseba 2003		EA Sports	****	67
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichee THQ 0000 23 MX Superfy Featuring Ricky Carmichee THQ 0000 59 *Mxx APV Unesamed THQ 0000 91 *Mxx APV Unesamed Sony CEA 000 91 Mxx II Exe Obadat 000 60	• MNP Basebal 2004		EA Sports		4 80
MK Ruger THU 0000 59 MK Superly Featuring Ricky Carmichae THU 0000 59 *MX N ATV Unleashed THU 0000 61 *My Street Sony CEA 0000 62 My N II Exile Ublack 0000 62	 MyP Baseball 2005 		EA Sports	****	4 9
Mx Superty Featuring Ricky Carmichae TH0 59 *Mx vx ATv. Unleashed TH0 91 *My Street Sony CEA 60 Mystrill Exite Ubsolft 60		oky Carm chae	THO	****	49
•MX vx ATV Unleashed THQ •••• 91 •My Street Sony CEA ••• 67 Myst II Exile Jb.soft •••4 62					52
+ My Street Sony CEA ◆◆◆ €7 Myst II Exie Ubsoft ◆◆◆◆ 60	MX Superfly Featuring	g Ricky Carmichae	THO	0001	59
Myst II Ex.te ⊔b.spft ●●●4 60	• 'AX vs ATV Unleast	red	THO	****	91
	 My Street 		Sony CEA		€7
, Herops K. •••	Myst II Exite		Jb-soft		60
	- Herops		к		-

GAME	Pulling Com	
		69.6
MX Unleashed Nemco Museum	THO OOO	78
V a Breaker	Namco OOO	53
VASCAR 2001	EA Sports •••	40
NATION 2011 Chary for the	Gas LA Sports ****	85
VASCAR Heat	Infogrames ••••	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports ••••	14 51
NALCH Florider (2011)	LA apares • • • •	
ACCAD Date Date	In aport, ****	73 61
. Ops Warship Gunner	Koei •••	71
NBA 2K2	Suga Sports ***	53
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports ****	63
BA Balt	Midway Siri ••••	
-BAam 2004	Acciam eet	41 75
NBA€ 2001		4.
NBA . vc 2002	EA Sports •••	51
• VBA . → 2103	FA Sports ••••	
NBA L > 2004	EASI ats ••••	
NBA 1 . 2005	EASI HIS ***	
v8A St v40 ± 2001		14
VBA \$1 1:10 1:2004	Sonville ***	
151 11 12	Karama ***	(75
VBA Street	EA Sports Big ••••	0 47
NBA Street Vol. 2	EA Sports Big ••••	68
* vBA Sticetiv3	EA Sports Big ••••	H 9
Sa Tettie di es Trie fol		ow t
Lock. Ettermist have bicks	k your decide pro-	
UNLOCKABLE SHOES		
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When the order! RBK ATR BOOM DIZZLE WHITE Street Challenge Win the Rbk 3-o RBK S CARTER BB I WHITE/BL Town Challenge Win the Rbk 3-o RBK CL BB E SSURE BROWN PO STORMAN AND A RBK BOLLEVARO RBK BOULEVARO	/Situer 500 o 3 Challenge 2 event 40 3 Challenge 3 event 40 2 event	
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but the online play is where the game really shines

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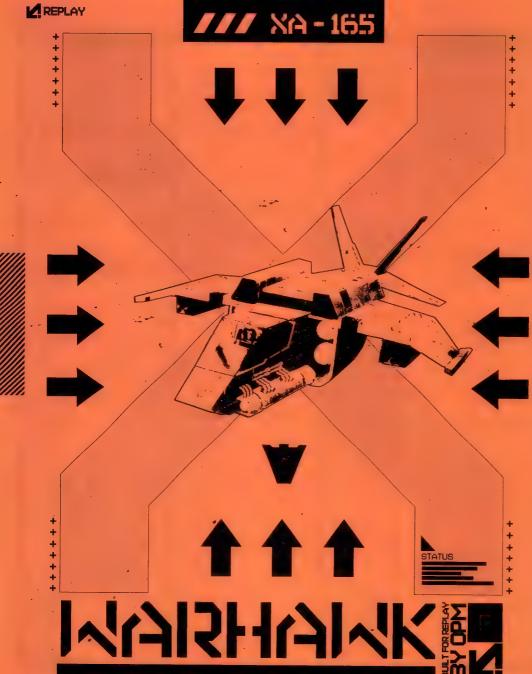
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Eidos/Fresh Games ••••

ha y Fusion Race of Champions Activision •••

Pro Risking Activision •••

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61	Ratchet & Clank	Sony CEA	****	63
73	Ratchet & Clank: Going Command	o Sony CEA	00000	75
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76	Rayman 2: Revolution A yman 3: Hoods in Havor	Uhisott	****	41
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62	· Arvenge Pro	Acctam		41
76	Sirally 2 Runthe Boxing Round 2	Midway		40
87	R is Card Souces 20,03	ntogrames M dway		40
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-	Red Faction	THO		46
51,	et Fact + 1 • 1 Nichal End of Honor V	THE vendiumiyersai	****	4.
7/4	e Esting 1+	Nitsine	****	72
40	a effic	Bar	0001	41
61	Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom	00001	48
2	Resident Evo Outhleak	Capcon		81
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78	Roman Caste Wollerstein JR	Activision		71
	R bit Keng	Sanda	*****	5.1 82
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13	And of Red	Konan		43
.00	Rise to Honor	Stry (EA		
	A God of Character	Sony CEA	****	78
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46	A hotech i vasio	Globa Star		86
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	Finale: Baltierry	TOK	****	62
43	Roy e Ocs	Kemco		75
90	 mance of the Three Kingdoms V mance of the Three Kingdoms V 			60 73
31	RPG Maker 2	Agetec	****	74
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1	* qby	EA Sports	****	40
54	• gby 2094 • gby 2005	EA Sports	***	73 91
53	Rumb e Racing	EA Games		45
85	н mb o Roses	Konami	***	88
90	R ne Viking War ord	Take Two		48
55 80	Rigar The Legendary Adventure Soit Lake 2002	Tecmo E dos	****	64
91	SHE THE ZOUZ	Seqa	***	80
88	Sumera Warriers	Koe EA		81
83 5.0	S in its Warrors Xtieme Legends	Koei	***	88
84	Sirurday Night Speedway Silvage Skies	Atan Bam		81 56
88	S Her	G oba Star	****	88
BF4	Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THO	•••	
to ^d	Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	THO		58
75	Scorp is King Rise of the Akke Gundam Force Showdown!	Banda Banda	***	88
	ond Sight	Codemasters	****	86
2,5	Si cret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	****	75
52 91	: nk and Destroy	Conspiracy	****	66
60	S. ga Bass Fishing Due	Sega Sega	•••	67 90
82	Sona Soccer Stam	Sega Sports	••	62
ы	. · ya Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	*****	60
90	Si ga Superstars	Sega	****	88
44	Serious Sam Next Encounter Seve - Samura 20XX	Giobai Star Sammy	•••	81 80
7	S adow Hearts	Midway		52
78	Sradow Hearts Covenant	Midway	****	86
64	Shadow of Destiny	Konam	****	43
	. 8	Say	****	*



MSFORM June 2005

AT EVER HAPPENED TO

DID TWISTED METAL SNUFF OUT THIS CULT-CLASSIC SHOOTER?

In the early days of the PlayStation, Singletrac seemed to base its games on bizerre vehicle hybrids: Twisted Metal bolted a tank's arsenal onto ordi nary cars and trucks; Jet Moto's fictional bike was the love child of a Jet Ski and a hovercraft-with a rocket engine thrown in for good measure; and Warhawk, the studio's first game, fused a helicopter gunship with a fighter jet. The recipe seemed to work. Twisted Metal thrives today, with versions on the PS2 and PSP, and Jet Moto had two sequels before puttering out. Warhawk, however, never resurfaced.

The game's disappearance wasn't due to any lack of love. Electronic Gaming Monthly gave it three 9.0s and a 9.5 (out of 10). They showered it with back-of-the-box praise, calling it "everything you could ever want from a game," "I've waited my entire life for a game like Warhawk," wrote another reviewer. "Excellent control, killer graphics, and smokin" sound effects are just the beginning." ... Or the end

EGM considered Warhawk a flight sim, likely due to its 3D graphics. The year was 1995 after all, and PlayStation was fresh from the factory. Polygons were still mostly in the realm of PC games, where crude 3D simulated every trivial detail of flight (see Microsoft Flight Simulator) Warhawk's in-the-cockpit view invites such comparisons. Outside the cockpit, though, the game eschews reality for sci-fi landscapes swarming with strange enemy aircraft. The levels themselves span all manner of ter rain and setting, from deep canyons lined with gun turrets to a desert flanked by weaponized pyramids. One particularly clever level sends you gunning after a giant flying aircraft carrier (again with the mutant machines), which you defeat by weaving through a series of elevator shafts and hallways inside the ship. But while Warhawk has no basis in reality, it presents itself realistically, a path followed by many modern games, from Burnout 3 to God of War. The aircraft may not behave according to the laws of physics, but when you die in Warhawk, huge pixels of brown and red blood splatter across the cockpit.

Unsurprisingly, what folks considered "killer graphics" 10 years ago look incredibly primitive today. The environments are so devoid of texture and detail that they look sterile, almost abstract. Large panels of flat color and gritty edges blur across the screen. Warhawk showed both the promise and the peril of 3D. The open environments and 360-degree range of motion create a sense of freedom, but that same openness threatens the pacing of the action. 2D shooters usually lead you down a scripted path, with your enemies attacking on cue. In Warhawk, you decide where to go and when. It seems Singletrac's solution was to inundate the player with as many targets and enemies as possible. To most modern gamers,

Warhawk would seem chaotic

Like many games in the early days of CD-based gaming consoles, Warhawk tells its story via live-action video clips. The pilots, Hatch and Walker, are played by a couple of Miami Vice casting call rejects with Kendoll hair, their costumes apparently made of spray-painted skateboard and football pads strapped over flight suits. Between levels, we're treated to spats between the pair and their female commander, Jassic, whose over-the-top, cross-eyed intensity makes for good, if unintentional, laughs. You can't beat dialogue like "I don't like mysteries, corporal. They have a way of killing people

Warhawk's disappearance from the scene could have something to do with Twisted Metal, Singletrac's cash cow hit series. The games share quite a few similarities, notably a dark visual style and nearly identical button configuration. The power-ups you collect along the way in Warhawk also evoke TM's homing missiles, rockets, and the like. Single trac's car-combat game made a much bigger splash than its air-combat title, and the company quickly turned out Twisted Metal 2. Shortly there after, Singletrac parted ways with Sony, which had published all of its games up until that point. Sony owned the rights to Singletrac's work, so

POLYGONS WERE STILL MOSTLY IN THE REALM OF PC GAMES....

a Warhawk sequel was out of the picture at that point, Technically, Sony could have handed the game off to 989 Studios, as it did with Twisted Metal (with horrible results), but, thankfully, it didn't

When Singletrac (rechristened Incog-that's right, the very same people who brought you the awesome God of War returned to Sony's publishing fold in 2001, it set out to revive the flagging Twisted Metal franchise with Twisted Metal: Black. Those holding out for a new Warhawk may have been disappointed, but the game's chopper/jet did make a cameo as Black's final boss, proving that the cult-classic shooter still held a special place in its designers' hearts. Could we see a Twisted Metal: Head-On-style PSP revival? Or perhaps a triumphant return on PS3? Now that both Head-On and God of War have been released, things have got ten suspiciously quiet at Incog. Could the studio be up to something? Only time will tell. & Robert Ashley









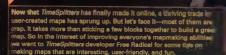


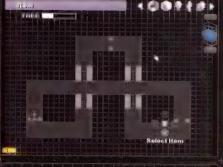






RS: FUTURE











- 1. Don't be overambitious. Enormous, sprawling layouts might look pretty in the editor, but they could be daunting or confusing in the game.
- 2. Experiment with combinations of stackable and nonstackable sizes to make interesting vertical spaces.
- ■3. Make a point of regularly previewing the map for playability when constructing it. You'll spot potential problems and you're also more likely to think of interesting ideas as you move through it.
- 4. When working on a map, save different versions and rename them.
 You may want to go back and take things in a different direction.
- 5. If you're making a symmetrical team deathmetch or capture-the-beg map, add details to make areas distinctive and help players navigate the map. Use color subtly to define areas of interest (e.g., team starts) or use, some different tiles in key areas.
- 45. Test logic in simple cases before combining elements to make more complicated functions.
- 7. It is likely that you will want to experiment with different locations for items or objects with associated logic. By placing these objects on 1xt, tiles, you can easily move the tiles around the map to try fresh combinations. You can make things move permanent later.



YOUR TURN
Do you have your own

ssue of OPM

opm@ziffday's com with the subject line reading "TimeSplitters User Maps" and you may see them printed in a future

30 Sectorids Non-derit. Voic and Rivery to be Early by Proper.

MULTIPLAYER

rou may remember from our ray ew last month that we had some issues. At honline play in the early vers on of the game we were using for the rewew. Naw that the game is out, we're happy to report that most online game is not uncommonate smooth y for us. There is the occasional stutter, and it's not uncommonate incover you're mable it on a game (this is water) to the host being behind a firewall, but when it works, it works early we. It may not be the deepest online shoulter on PSZ, but it's possibly the fastest.

▲ S. When you're happy with how your logic is functioning, take some time to edit the names of counters and locations. This will help others see how your map works and will also help you if you revisit it later and want to refine or change things.

TO WINDS

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9. Use custom character and weapon sets to theme your story maps. Changing character strengths and weapon types can radically change the map's difficulty and playability.

10. Remember that someone playing a new story map needs as much help as possible to know what to do. Use the description, briefing, objectives, and display messages to point them in the right direction.

11. You will probably be better at playing your story map than almost; anyone playing it fresh, since you will have gained experience testing it. Don't make things too hard or you'll put people off! It's a bigger challenge to make acmething entertaining than something unplayably hard. of



I'm sick, tired, and jittery with agitation over the

and large, monster turds. When I'm sports-gam-

ing alone, I often think: Hey, I should go online

and find some human competition! Then I remember that the first 20 minutes of my search will be spent chitchatting in rooms, trying to avoid the pool of jerk-offs who pride themselves.

on going for it on every fourth down-even if

they're backed up to their own 2-yard line. If I'mlucky enough to get into a game, my stomach capsizes when I realize I'm playing some humpo who uses an online glitch over and over and

over, or I'm struck with The Ring Two-type dread

when I'm winning because my opponent might

Instead, I end up calling my mates from-

around the country and an usually met with sleepy-voiced wives and just-woken girlfriends

asking why I'm calling so late. Then I realize I'm

the only ass-clown in my circle of friends up until

2 a.m. who's ignoring his girlfriend while trying

general rule that online sports gamers are, by

TODD ZUNIGA

is a former OPMer living to NYC. If you want to living him to a Mets game or just have a queedon, contact him at the sportsquy@ziffdevis.com.

to scare up a late-night game of Madden.

My latest concern is that I'll be playing my PSP on the Q into Manhattan and link up to some guy for a three-inning affair of MVP. He'll have discovered some Wi-Fi glitch, and then I'll call his manual manual manual manual manual deserves) and then he will punch me in the face (something he thinks I deserve and something It

Is losing really so bad? Are we so frustrated by how much life kicks the crap out of us on a day-to-day basis (woe is me: Jennifer doesn't like

to stop cheating. That's a lot of man hours that could be dedicated to adding in awards or other, online game mode...

Can't someone start something like a "This-GuySucksOnline.com" site (if it's not already a porn site) and post the names of online gamers who cheat, so no one will make the mistake of playing them? Otherwise, I know I'm going to go hothead in public and get walloped and none of us—especially me—needs that.

Moving on: I hate the Raiders and their acquisition of Randy Moss. They're going to be a ter-

CAN'T SOMEONE POST THE NAMES OF ONLINE GAMERS WHO CHEAT?

me; I bounced my rent check; this isn't butter it's cream cheesel) that we take it out in an online game of NBA 2K5? Where's the sense of playing

by the rules, the sense of fairness? Not only does it make me hate people—something I only fake doing, usually—it also burts the games. The worst part is that developers spend a ridiculous amount of time guarding against this utter turdosity. I'd estimate that around 30 percent of online programming time is spent trying

ror in Madden 2006. I hate that, too.

The NBA opted for a five-company deal, meaning no exclusivity for over five years. The NBA might have a watered-down brand on the court, but on the console there are still solid games with lots to prove and improve upon. This is excellent news.

Winning Eleven 8 hasn't been announced for PSP—get on with it, Konamil I'm stuck trading off between WTS and FIFA over here!



disconnect.

SILENT BUT DEADLY
Over the years, OPM
reviewers have given the
tince PS2 Silent Hill
games the exact same
score (though for different reasons each time)
So you to 1 se. What's
your havorite Silent Hill
Send your answers to
young 1 servers to
young 1 servers
you

BAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE I	HH.R
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	Sony CEA	*****	62
Sly 2: Band of Thieven	Sony CEA		86
Smash Cars	Metro3D		7
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco		56
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament 2	Named	****	8.
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar	****	39
5 ugg er's Rin 2 Host e Territory	Rockstar	00001	5
Soccer America International Cup	Hot B	••	46
Swiger Mania	EA/Lego	0001	5
+ SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony CEA	*****	60
# SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SFALs	Snny CEA	*****	75
oler of Fortune	Ma esco	***	50
Some Heroes	Sega		7.7
S + c Mega Collection	Sega	***	88
Soul Congor II	-		172
. is, Reaver 2	Eidos		52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	0001	75
Space Race	nfogrames	991	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	04	76
Sized Kings	Acclaim	****	70
. x and the Cursed Mum ny	THO	****	70
Spider-Man	Activision	*****	57
ter Man 2	Activ s on		ьз
	intogrames	****	ь,
Spleatelown River troop Write			12
JigeBob SqualePants Battle for Bixin Botte			75
SpongeBob SquarePants The Mov e	THO	*****	87
Sh, Fiction	Sammy	••	84
SpyHunter	Midway	*****	50
* * 2	M v	***	
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly Viveno	li Universal	***	64
the state of the s			-

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
at the family beauty become	4	•••	-
SSX	EA Sports Big		9 38
SSX Tricky	EA Sports Big		
4 SSX 3	EA Sports Big		• 74
Star Ocean fill the Englot Time	Square finx		84
Star Trek Shattered Universe	TDK	**	75
Star Trek Voyager Elite Force	Ma,esco		53
Star Wars Battlefront	LucasArts	****	86
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts		64
Star Wars The Clone Wars	JudasArts	•••	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts		45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts		56
s ir Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	****	H 55
Star Wars Starlighter	LucasArts		43
Starsky & Hutch	G.mrs		110
State of Emergency	Rockstar		55
Sitch Experiment 626	Sony CEA		59
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	n Capcom		84
Sircet Fighter EX 3	Capcom		39
Street Hoops	Activision	0001	60
Sinitch Panic	Consoracy		\$7
• ke farce Baw ng	Crave		
	ogrames/Atari		59
S h Rebe ion	Metro3D	••••	62
The Suffering	M dway	***	80
Sukoder II	Konami	***	63
Su koden IV	Konami	***	89
Summer Heat Beach Volleybal	Acc a m		12
Summoner	THQ	•••	39
S mmoner 2	THO		62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	****	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	***	4

GAME	PUBLISHER SC	ORE ISSUE	GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE E	SPUE
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft ●		€C Sudden Impact	Crave		7
Super Monkey Ball Deluxe	Sega •		nder the Skin	Capcom		85
S per Trucks Racing	XS Games	4 76	,n son	Tecmo	****	41
Si percar Street Challenge	Act v sion •		' imited Saga	Square Enix		70
S perman Shadow of Apoko ps S rlino H30	Atar • Rockstar •		real Tournament	nfogrames		40 88
SWAT G oba Strike Team	S erra •		The Urbz Sims in the City 3. Rally 3	EA Games Infogrames	*****	
Swing Away Golf	EA Games •		Numpire Night	Namco		52
Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA .			endi Universai		82
N. Drum Master	Nance		V+XK	Acclaim		67
Tak and the Power of Juju Tak 2 The Staff of Dreams	THO •		tor ous Boxers	Empire		51
Tarzan Untamed	Ubisoft •		* vetcong Purple Haze with Joe	G obal Star Capcom		£8 85
Taz Wanted	Infogrames •		vi l lee 2	Cape m	••••	013
Teenage Mutant N nja Turtles	Konam .		Virtua Fighter 4		****	55
" nago Muta i N la Tirt es 2	Konam •	40	Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	Sega		72
Takken 4	Namco •		Virtua Quest	Sega		- 31
sken 5		***	Virtual on Marz	Sega		76
Tekken Tag Tournament	Marsett		Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision Bam		74
Tenchu Fatal Shadows	Sega •		Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	3D0		14
Tenchu Wrath of Heaven	Activision •	67	War of the Winesters		-	1 64
The Terminator Dawn of Fate	Atar •		 Wart ammer 40,000 Fire Warrior 	THO		74
Terminator 3. Rise of the Machines	Atar •		Warr ors of Might and Magic	3D0		44
Terminator 3 The Redemption	Atar ●		Wave Rady	Eidos		53
Test Drive Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open	Intogrames •		Way of the Samurai		••••	ħy
Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open Test Drive Eve of Destruction	Infogram(. • Atar		Way of the Samurai 2 When of Firthine	Capcom Atari		82 7h
Tetris Worlds	7H0 •		M uplash		0001	2>
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games .	*** 41	Worll Tour	endi Universal		6.3
The Thing	Universa •		Whiteout	Konami		65
Thunderstrike Operation Phoenix	Eidos •		№ Id Arms 3	Sony CEA		€2
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports .		Wind Wild Racing	Interplay		39
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002 Figer Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports EA Sports		Woonest Fasion		****	43 57
€ Times William fAll Tool 1004	Marie 1		W zardry Tale of the Forsaken Land			53
* 1-ger Woods PGA Tour 2005	EA Sports .	0001 BB	Ty Wordpacker Burr Burze d Park			5.7
Time Crisis 2	Namco •		* World Champ onship Poker	Crave	01	90
Time Crisis 3	Namco •		*World Championship Pool 2004	valeco	•••	76
Time Crisis Crisis Zone	Namec •		World Championship Pop. 2004 World Destruction League Thunder	Tanks 3D0	•••	42
TimeSplitters 2		•••• 63	Vorid Series Baseball 2K3	nfogrames Sega Sports		+3
· Time Spilitoris: Fazoro Protect	EA Cames.	**** 91	World Jacker Winning Elevan & he			
FOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters •		World Supper: Winning Einven 7 in	(I Kanumi.	*****	78
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave •		Aorid Secuer Winning Eleven 81			
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave •		World Tour Socrer 2002	Sony CEA		5.1
Clanc, s Ghost Recon Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle			World Tour Soccer 2003 World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA Sony CEA		65 80
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft •	80	+ World Tour Soccer 2006	Gather ng		91
* in Clancy's Spinter Celi	Ub son •		Worms Forts Under Siege	Sega	•••	92
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos The	ory Unisoft •		Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	01	
* Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tom			WRITE Woods faulty Champion Units	B	*****	57
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness ▼Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision •	72	Wreck ess. The Yakuza Missions WTA Tour Tennis	Activ s on Konam		57
Frony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision •		A E Crush Hour	THO		- 7
Frong Hawk's Underground	Activision •		WWE SmackDewn! Here Comes th		0001	76
Tony Hawk's Underground 2	Activisio •		WWE SmackDown! Just Bring N	THO	****	<u> </u>
Top Angler	X cat •		WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mou	th THO		64
Top Gear Dare Devi	Ke nco •		- AWE SmackDown vs Raw			-
Top Gun, Combat Zones Total Immersion Racing	Titus • Empire •		A Squad	EA Games		1.8
Transformers	Atar •	-	Tle X-Files Resist or Serve Vill A Men Legends	Activision		87
	Infogrames •		X Men Next Dimension	Act v s on		64
Tribes Aerial Assault	Srerra •		A2 Wo ver ne's Revenge	Activision		69
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports •		x nosaga Episode DWZM	Namco		55
T ple P ay Basebal.	EA Sports •		X+ nosaga Episode II J√GCB	Namco		90
• Yr via Pirsuit Unhinged	Atar •		AGRA Extreme G Racing Association			
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	Activision •		+ XIII	Ub soft		75 49
Turok Evolution	Atrus •		Yunya Cabal stal City Skater Ys VI The Art of Napishi m	Koei	****	49 95
Twiste I Mittel Black	Sony Ltt A B		Y. Gi Oh! The Quelists of the Roses			95 67
Twisted Metal Black Online	Sony CEA		Gi Dhi Capsule Monster Coisea		•••	88
T, the Tasman an Tiger	EA Games •	62	1. Yu Haxusho Dark Tournament	Atan		88
T, the Tasmanian Tiger 2 Bush Resci			Zapper	Inlogrames		64
JEFA Euro 2004	EA Sports •		ZOE Zone of the Enders		*****	
UFC Throwdown	Crave •		of the Engers. The 2nd Runner	Knoge	****1	-



ADER REVIEWS

GOD OF WAR HHAT YOU SAID

"The very first level of God of War is where you fight this awasome Hydra. From that point on, this game only gets better! God of War is an amazing game with stunning graphics, a moving score, top-notch voice acting (with Oscar winner Linda Hunt), and SO much more! The combat system allows you to string together amazing combos with a few button presses. The art direction is outstanding and the enemies and boss fights are just amazing. The only thing I feel is bad about this game is that it is too short, but overall, this game was one wild ride!"

WHAT WE SAID

"People do not play games because they break new ground. People. play games because they are fun. And fun is God of War's greatest

NBA STREET VS WHAT YOU SAID

What you said: "This has become one of my favorite games ever. My favorite parts are the gamebreaker dunks and dunk contests. But the gamebreaker is one of the most annoying parts too-when you are about to dunk and you expect your teammates to run up while you're in the air so you can pass the ball to them, they just sit there hoping you score. The trick stick on the game is a great way to use fewer controls for special moves. The only other thing I would like to point out is the court creator because it allows you to make your own style court. It feels a lot like I'm playing THUG2 again."

WHAT WE SAID

What we said: "Every time I set the controller down after completing an extended NBA Street V3 session, I couldn't help but pick it right back up again."

AT YOU SAID

What you said: "Who doesn't like driving, fighting, shooting, and flying-and better yet, there's no blood or gore. What I'm talking about is Jak 3. And let's face it, Jak is back and three times better. No matter who you are, you will like Jal; if you like GTA, you will like this; if you like platformers, you'll like this; and if you like comical games, you'll love this."

WHAT WE SAID

Dominique Levesque

Christopher Cross

Shane Heslet

"The gameplay is as varied as ever, mixing driving, shooting, hoverboarding, and flying with straight-up platforming in a most satisfying fashion."

Got a review? Then e-mail it to opm@ziffdevis.com with a subject line of "Reader Review" and we may run it in an upcoming issue.

REWIND

THE SAGA CONTINUES

OPM is just seven issues away from No. 100. Continuing with last month's theme, we're taking a look at Issue #12 through #22. Thrill to the odd choices of games to preview! Wonder at now-familiar franchises seen for the first time! Gaze in abject horror at the dated covers! And as a special bonus, learn a little bit about what went on behind the scenes.

ISSUE #12: SEPTEMBER 1998

Cover story: Parasite Eve

Reviewed: Parasite Eve (4/5), Mega Man

"Although a PlayStation version [of Soul

to the successful translation of Tekken 3."

Calibur hasn't officially been announced yet,

you can be sure it's in the planning stages, due

Previewed: Tenchu, Wild 9, NFL Blitz

Most unreasonably optimistic quote:

Legends (4/5), C: The Contra Adventure (1.5/5)



Cover story: R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 Reviewed: R-Types (3.5/5), WCW/nWo Thunder (1/5), Contender (4/5)

Previewed: Street Sk8er, Clock Tower II, Need for Speed: High Stakes

Coolest fanboy moment: David Hayter records an acceptance speech for Metal Gear Solid's sweep of our 1998 Editors' Awards-as Solid Snake. "Thanks, OPM. You guys rock." Yes!



ISSUE #18: MARCH 1999

Cover story: Silent Hill

Reviewed: Silent Hill (4/5), Syphon Filter (4/5) Resurrection, Elmo's Letter Adventure Tiger Woods PGA Tour '99, EA learns that someone snuck a video of the incredibly offensive South Park prequel "The Spirit of Christ-



Previewed: Legend of Legaia, Alien Most embarrassing moment: After shipping mas" onto the disc. Parents are not amused.



SSUE #13: OCTOBER 1998

Cover story: Spyro the Dragon Reviewed: Spyro the Dragon (4/5), Tales of Destiny (4/5), Devil Dice (3.5/5) Previewed: Xenogears, Tomb Raider III Behind the scenes: This bland cover was originally supposed to be a beautiful, unique piece of 3D cut-paper art depicting Spyro in flight. But our editorial director at the time deemed it "too kiddie" and ditched it at the last minute.



ISSUE #19 APRIL 1999

Cover story: Year of the Role-playing Game Reviewed: Legend of Legeia (4/5), Street Sk8er (2.5/5), Rollcage (3.5/5) Previewed: Final Fantasy VIII, Gran Turismo 2,

Driver, Point Blank 2

Biggest waste of space: Three pages on the PocketStation, the memory card-sized, monochromatic game peripheral that Sony swore would one day come out in the States. It didn't.



ISSUE #14: NOVEMBER 1998

Cover story: Tomb Raider III Reviewed: Metal Gear Solid (5/5), Xenogears (4/5), Tenchu (4/5)

Previewed: Mr. Domino, Twisted Metal III Least prescient quote: "I'm hoping it can just be dark and chilling like the game-good zombies, good makeup, good effects." -George Romero on the Resident Evil movie, which he was originally slated to write and direct



ISSUE #20: MAY 1999

Cover story: Star Wars: The Phantom Menace Reviewed: Ridge Racer Type 4 (4/5), Need for Speed: High Stakes (4.5/5), Army Men 3D (3/5) Previewed: Wipeout 3, Ape Escape Most misleading quote: "How many do you want?" -Ken Kutaragi, "Father of the PlayStation," when asked how many controller ports the PS2 would have. So of course everyone assumed the answer was four.



Cover story: Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped Reviewed: Crash Bandicoot 3 (5/5), Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus (4.5/5), The Fifth Element (.5/5) Previewed: Syphon Filter, Silent Hill Best quote: "Jim the guard got a kick out of the C4 I strapped to him. We laughed and laughed. Actually, I guess I did all the laughing." -from Solid Snake: Declassified, a visual tour through Metal Gear Solid's photo mode



ISSUE #21-JUNE 1999

Cover story: Resident Evil 3: Nemesis Reviewed: Street Fighter Alpha 3 (5/5), Ehrgeiz (3.5/5), Bloody Roar 2 (4/5)

Previewed: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, Ape Escape Most surreal quote: "Jill runs and runs from the Tyrant, until she finally realizes what is really causing her to run is her fear of love. She and the Tyrant get married and honeymoon while Raccoon City burns to the ground."



ISSUE #16: JANUARY 1999

Cover story: Gex: Deep Cover Gecko Reviewed: Tomb Raider III (3.5/5), Twisted Metal III (2.5/5), Apocalypse (3/5) Previewed: Soul Reaver, Irritating Stick

Biggest brouhaha over nothing: We spoofed Janet Jackson's famous Rolling Stone cover with Gex's hands covering the breasts of costar (and Baywatch babe) Marliece Andrada You would not believe the letters we got.



ISSUE #22: JULY 1999

Cover story: 25 Games You Must Play in 1999 Reviewed: Star Ocean: The 2nd Story (4.5/5), Ape Escape (5/5), GTA: London 1969 (2.5/5) Previewed: Crash Team Racing, Quake II, Fear Effect, Echo Night

Oddest story idea: "ePlay"-we put a bunch of videogame tchotchkes on eBay and document how much they sell for. The big winner: a Mega Man promotional standee, at \$16.25.

ADVERTISER INDEX

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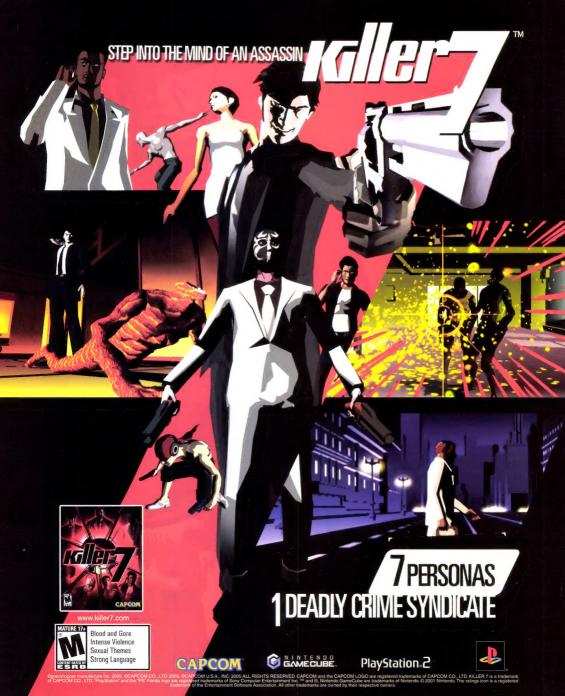
THE GATE OPENS SPRING 2005





PlayStation₈2





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